THE ATTACK ON LEVIATHAN

DONALD DAVIDSON

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Regionalism and Nationalism in the UNITED STATES

One law for the lion and ox is oppression
—WILLIAM BLAKE

By DONALD DAVIDSON

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK is a series of essays and informal studies grouped around a general theme. It does not pretend to be a systematic and definitive consideration of sectionalism and regionalism in the United States. To deal adequately with that subject would require a lifetime of travel and investigation and would call for a combination of special skills, particularly in history and other branches of social science, such as I cannot claim to possess, great though my interest and assiduous my reading in those fields may have been. I can claim only the layman's right to judge warring interpretations of American life and history, to set them beside the reality of experience, immediate or remembered, and then to choose for himself whom his soul will believe. That right, troublesome though it may be to authority, and upon occasion embarrassing even to the individual who claims it, is itself a cardinal American principle, always worth maintaining. With a freedom, therefore, that I might have been less bold to exercise under different circumstances, I have ranged here and there among experts of various degrees and specialties, asking continually whether this monograph, or that survey, or this newspaper article, or that book, can be trusted in its description of what goes on in the United States or in its prognostication of what ought to be and will be. When these agencies are discovered in the act of arranging such intimate matters as one's income tax, or the education of one's children, or the veritable root and stock of his life, it is time for the layman to put aside his awe and ask whether these people really know what they are talking

about, or whether they are, after all, not divine, but perhaps as fallibly human as oneself.

In thus ranging I have often become indebted to the very writers whose views I would at some points criticize; and my exploration of the general subject is at times patently and deliberately a restatement in layman's terms of what experts and authorities have had to say. Such a review seems the more appropriate because the works of specialists, though enormously influential, are not always widely read, are seldom brought into their related place in a general discussion, and therefore often escape judgment until they have already taken effective form in society. The completeness with which I have presented their views will be taken, I trust, not only as an acknowledgment of obvious indebtedness, but as an indication of my respect for their serious and able devotion to their tasks, and will clear me of any charge of wanton disrespect for learning.

Some of the essays here grouped together were written and published in periodicals at intervals during the five years from 1932 to 1937. All of these have undergone some revision; in a few cases they have been expanded. However, rather than undertake a drastic revision that would make such essays chapters in a consecutive and closely unified study, I have chosen to let them stand in substance as they were, even at the cost of some repetition. The rest of the book—about one third—is entirely new, and has been added to round out consideration of the subject. The incompleteness of consideration, even yet, will be evident enough. I particularly regret the lack of any very extensive and adequate discussion of the Far West. But I did not dare to presume too much upon an experience of the United States which, though it has taken me far and wide through the eastern half of the country, has carried me little further west than the eastern edge of the Great Plains.

I wish to acknowledge my very great indebtedness to those who have aided me in these years, not only in material ways but by precept and example: to John Donald Wade and Mrs. Ida Frederick Wade of Georgia, under whose kindly and hospitable roof the writing of these essays began; to Stark Young, for invaluable assistance; to Frank L. Owsley and Allen Tate, for long and steadfast encouragement and helpful suggestions; to Seward Collins, editor of *The American Review*, without whose active interest a great many of these essays might never have seen the light; to Mr. and Mrs. John Murph of Georgia; to the late Homer Noble and Mrs. Eunice Noble of Vermont; to Lucia B. Merrielees of Montana; to James Southall Wilson of Virginia; to Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Sherrer of Ohio, from whom I have learned more of the Old Northwest than books can tell; and most of all to my wife, Theresa Sherrer Davidson.

I wish to express my thanks to *The American Review* for permission to reprint those essays which originally appeared in its columns; and to *The Southern Review, Poetry, a Magazine of Verse,* and *The Hound and Horn* for a similar courtesy. The essay now entitled "Federation or Disunion" is a revised form of an essay entitled "That the Nation May Endure," which appeared in *Who Owns America?* It is reprinted by special permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, authorized publishers of *Who Owns America?*

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THE NATION WE ARE

I. The Diversity of America

In Charles A. Beard's popular history, *The Rise of American Civilization*, are frequent bits of irony and sarcasm that remind us of another great historian, one of the first who chose to make history the study of a social organism rather than a mere chronology. Gibbon's way, Byron said, was to sap a solemn creed with a solemn sneer. Beard's irony is not solemn; rather it is a confident levity, that breaks out into covert witticism whenever the formal professions of statesmen and parties are seen, in the brazen after-light of economic determinism, to be in patent conflict with supposed realities. Writing of the early debates over strict and liberal interpretations of the Constitution, Beard says:

> If some of the minor politicians thought their linguistic pattern flowered inexorably from unanswerable premises, there is no doubt that the first thinkers who sat at the loom weaving the texture of constitutional theory, knew what and how they were designing. It remained for smaller men to treat Federal jurisprudence as one of America's Eleusinian mysteries.

Linguistic pattern! It is one of Beard's favorite metaphors, and he returns to it again and again, always with the implication that the purpose of a linguistic pattern in the mouth of an American politician or even in a document of state is to disguise reality.

Let the historian have his moment of jocosity. We can join in the laughter until we reflect that there are all kinds

of linguistic patterns and that some, not to be despised, reveal truths which the formal historian has been too prone to pass by. If Beard had looked a little further, he might have discovered that certain other realities of American history are not hidden but are rather openly and honestly disclosed in the familiar vocabulary, or linguistic pattern, of the American people.

There is, for example, the unrecognized reality of sectionalism—or, as some would have it, regionalism—and its actual role in the national being of the American people. If the vocabulary of the people rather than the solemn protestations and documentations of statesmen be consulted as evidence, there has never been a time in the history of the Republic when Americans were unwilling to acknowledge sectionalism as an effective reality, amounting almost to a commonplace, to be accepted and dealt with entirely aside from its status as a political and social problem.

Common speech is vocal where the Constitution is silent. For tendencies that assume a living form definite enough to be encountered in ordinary life must be dealt with, and, to be dealt with, must be named. So there have always been familiar designations for those roughly outlined geographic divisions that interlock within the national arrangement and overlap the state arrangement. The habitat and manners of the Yankee, the Southerner, and of all the varieties of Westerner have been known and named at all periods in our history. We have a big medicine for the nation, by which, gravely passing the calumet from hand to hand, we assure ourselves that there is no North, no South, no East, no West, except as compass or winds may indicate; and we have a little medicine for the states, performed with assurances that require nowadays a more anxious and forcible puffing than of old. But no sooner is the mystical rite performed than we resume our usual characters, and are again Americans, certainly, but

with equal certainty also Americans of this or that geographic division. The definition of the American is never quite complete until the qualification is added: *And from what section of the country?*

Our devotions to the Great White Father have not, after all, stirred the Rockies from their base, or unchannelled the Mississippi, or removed the plains, the lakes, the climate itself. Nor have any devotions, aspirations, or mechanisms changed the American past, though they may have altered much else. It still remains a fact that the Puritans settled in New England and men of a different persuasion in Virginia; the Scandinavians went one way, the Scotch-Irish, the Huguenots, the African slave went another way. Gold was discovered in California, not in Tennessee. The Hartford Convention, the Texan Revolution, the War Between the States, the march of the Robber Barons, the growth of Wall Street are all realities which have taken a sectional form. If all the diverse elements that went into the peopling and making of America had been diffused more uniformly, or had spread over a more uniform physiographic area, or even had concentrated within bounds as narrow as England or France, the tale might have been different. But it did not happen so. There is no escape from the fact that the American nation is spread over a continental area, and that in the spreading process it has established local concentrations which have geographic bounds.

At this point we come upon a contradiction which has not always been welcome company to those who would make a party platform, or advocate a Federal statute, or vend a commodity, or carry a religious doctrine, or plan a national economy, or perform any act claiming to have merit and application throughout the whole area of the United States. How does one legislate for the nation as a whole? What is the whole nation? What is the national interest? The govern-

ment which is supposed to be national and which is charged with administering to the benefit of all citizens equally is an exceedingly abstract device. Its principle, defined in a written instrument which at points is more negative than positive, has to do with the federation of states, and the states themselves are likewise abstractly conceived, and are laid out, to a remarkable degree, in geometric rather than geographic patterns. The states and the Federal government represent conceptions or organizations rather than organisms. The government (or governments) cannot take formal notice, is in fact specifically forbidden in certain instances to take formal notice, of the actual geographic divisions—the sections or regions. The real and concrete thing does not express itself overtly in the abstract conception. The organizations do not coincide with the organisms. We are a federation of states; but we are a nation of sections. The unwritten constitution of that nation is a sectional constitution as apparent in folkways and political predilections as it is *not* apparent in the written document.

In all the 160-odd years of our history as a Republic this contradiction has existed without our ever drawing up a single really practical device for dealing with the problems which it created. We have, in fact, never really attempted to deal with it. The whole subject has long been taboo, among historians and statesmen alike, as if the existence of sections constituted a skeleton in the closet, which could not be brought to view without the most scandalous and violent results. There have been good reasons for this avoidance of an important issue, and there have been some reasons, effective enough, which cannot be called good. Of the various good reasons for public avoidance of the issue it is necessary for the moment to mention only one—an obvious reason. In the early days of the Republic the establishment and preservation of the national government was the *sine qua non* of

all policies, whether domestic or foreign. To have a national government working practically at home and to present a united front abroad to European powers waiting for any favorable opportunity to dismember and devour the bantling Independence—those were concerns that necessarily took precedence over all else. Although, even before the turn of the nineteenth century, there were definitely established sections—a New England, a Middle States, a South, and the first indications of a West—the considerations that they forced upon national attention were a matter to be hushed up and managed behind the scenes. From such original circumstances, sectionalism received a stigma which has never been erased. And so, even in dictionaries of the year 1936, the term sectionalism is defined, with a Johnsonian fillip, as "devotion, especially disproportionate, to the interests peculiar to a section of the country; sectional feeling, prejudice, etc." Then the dictionary notes, more realistically and appropriately, that the word is peculiar to the United States. It is not an Anglicism.

In the day of the nation's maturity, that definition can be altered without danger to the Republic. There is, in fact, more danger in leaving it unaltered than in seeking the way by which the fatal qualifications "disproportionate" and "prejudiced" may be removed. Those who held, sincerely or not, that sectionalism necessarily involved a dangerous or even treacherous devotion and a narrow prejudice looked forward to a time when all sectional differences, or at least all troublesome sectional differences, would be removed by some welding and unifying process that would work complete harmony where there had once been frequent and annoying discord. If nothing else would do the job, the industrial revolution, in its massiveness and energy, would certainly do it, perhaps in less time than older Americans could have conceived, perhaps in that glorious twinkling of an eye which the

Saints of the Church promised as the final transformation of the most corrupt sinner. Almost the contrary has happened. By one of those paradoxes that are common in all history, and nowhere more common than in American history, the moment when American uniformity was supposed to have been finally achieved through the standardizing processes was also the moment when the sectional issue came into the light in a form that could be openly and fully discussed.

By an irony that ought to please Charles A. Beard, the identical economic forces that seemed to be making America an area of unvarying uniformity also devoted some of the fruits of their labor to the endowment of historical research. A zeal for a slow and orderly form of retrospect became a by-product of the zeal for rapid technological advance. The act may ultimately prove as important in its consequences as the preservation of Greek culture by the Roman conqueror. At any rate, the American past is being systematically probed and analyzed as no immediate past has ever been probed before. The realistically exact history of America is now being superimposed upon the partisan and heroical tale of an earlier day. It was inevitable that the neglected function of the sections should be looked into by men who should have no interest in discrediting them or in ignoring their existence. The result is that we now have a fairly well-shaped historical theory of the place of the sections in American national life.

No doubt the emergence of this theory owes much to the accumulated labors of many minds; and above all it derives from the temper and method of a new school of historians, who are prone to make the "processes of social development" under special American conditions the guiding principle of their studies, and so are ready to consider evidence of a sort neglected by earlier schools. The complete formulation of the theory of the sections and their integral place in national

history was, nevertheless, mainly the work of one man, the late Frederick Jackson Turner.[1] He stated, what many had felt, that the sections are not vestiges from an older time, archaic and negligible, but have been and still are functions of the national life. They are real entities, not sentimental fictions: they have a place in the making of events, along with the Federal government and the state governments, although their place and power are not yet fully recognized or understood.

In Turner's theory, sectionalism is thus organic in the American establishment, but in a creative rather than a negative and destructive sense. It has grown out of the accidents and purposes that have attended the adaptation of a people, democratically inclined and originally of diverse but not unrelated European stocks and traditions, to life upon the North American continent. The history of the sections as sections has been long unwritten, and their place in the national order unexplored, because historians have fixed attention too exclusively upon the growth of the Federal organism, which they picture as dwarfing gradually the power of the states as it draws power into itself. But this bias must be altered when the historian begins, as Turner did, with the extensions of the frontier and sees how the people gather into geographic provinces, differentiated separately and fairly homogeneous within themselves, until these provinces form sections "which equal great European nations" and make the United States "a union of potential nations."

This is of course not only a new theory of American history but also suggests, by implication, a new function for the historian. The modern historian, through his natural affilia-

[1] William E. Dodd early dealt with sectionalism much as Turner did, and gave a somewhat definitive statement of the problem in such books as *Expansion and Conflict* (1911). Dodd's early writings about sectionalism antedate some of Turner's. Others, especially in the South and West, were thinking along the same lines.

tions with the sociologist, the economist, the political scientist, becomes in effect a statesman, or at least an adviser to the state in one form or another. The new conception of sectionalism has quickly found its way into the discussions and plans of the corps of experts, on the stage or behind the scenes of government, whom the modern state seems to need in the administration of its complex affairs. Who can tell what will come from such discussions and such plans? Certainly Turner's thesis is not acceptable to all who think they know what the United States ought to become. There are other theories of the national being and advocates ready to push these theories to the limit. But while a forecast of the future waits undecided, it is still true that now, for the first time, when America has its strongest central government and its most centralized economics, the problem of sectionalism is unabated and yet moves toward solution in so far as it is actually studied and not ignored. While in Europe the totalitarian state perfects a technique for controlling every action, if not every thought, of its citizens, the American government commits itself, through studies made by bureaus and committees, of how diversity may be tolerated and even encouraged. The social scientists, in solemn assembly, investigate "extra-regional controls." Regional planning commissions, for cities, states, and larger areas, are set up and begin to take on official life. The old taboo has been lifted; open and respectful consideration of sectionalism is actually under way.

But such consideration could hardly have been prompted by the issue of a single historical work, distinguished though it be. The new importance of sectionalism and regionalism in social science is only a part of a larger movement of ideas and emotions called forth by the exigencies of the times. In their most general aspect, the sectionalism and regionalism of the twentieth century are an American expression of dis-

satisfaction with the culture, or pseudo-culture that has accompanied the diffusion of industrialism. We begin to see that applied science has failed as a sovereign organizing principle in American life. It has not only failed to bring order and balance into the economic and political arrangements, but it has awakened a genuine discontent with the various forms of standardization that it seems to enforce. Above all —and this is the root of the matter—it has created doubt as to the authority and fitness of science to be an arbiter of values. Americans once debated the question of how much of civil liberty they must yield to the state in the common interest; they now raise the equally important question of how much of their preferred way of life they are obliged to sacrifice in order to secure economic provision and technological efficiency. Here too are liberties which will not lightly be yielded. Democracy assumes a cultural as well as a political meaning, and the old diversity of American patterns takes on a new significance which in turn sheds a new light upon old tendencies in art and letters.

In its most selfconscious aspect this new form of sectionalism appears as a movement of artists, uncovering what politicians and economists have ignored. It is a revolt against the excessive centralism of the machine age, a tendency running counter to the cosmopolitanism that for many years uprooted and abstracted art. The artists have been among the first to realize that some of the dilemmas of an industrial civilization may be downed or avoided by reaffirming the ties, local and native, which were once only shackles to be cast off. In its undeniable nostalgia this sectionalism contains a realistic answer to the question: *Whom shall my soul believe?* Worn out with abstraction and novelty, plagued with divided counsels, some Americans have said: I will believe the old folks at home, who have kept alive through many treacherous outmodings some good secret of life. Such moderns prefer to

grasp the particular. They want something to engage both their reason and their love. They distrust the advice of John Dewey to "use the foresight of the future to refine and expand present activities." The future is not yet; it is unknowable, intangible. But the past was, the present is; of that much they can be sure. So they attach themselves—or re-attach themselves—to a home-section, one of the sections, great or small, defined in the long conquest of our continental area. They seek spiritual and cultural autonomy.

This temper, or this movement, has somehow acquired the name of regionalism. It is really sectionalism under another name. One does not obtain spiritual and cultural autonomy simply by moving into grandfather's house. Inevitably the artist is driven, or at least the critical student of art is driven, into social and economic questions. Soon regionalism becomes a criticism of a false conception of American life and treads the ground of sectional issues. On that ground the phase of the arts temporarily called regionalism blends with the more general movement in which the physiographer, the sociologist, the economist, the folklorist, the historian, and the philosopher unite their studies. What all are seeking is a definition of the terms on which America may have both the diversity and the unity that give soundness to a tradition. They seek to define the nation in terms of its real and permanent rather than its superficial and temporary qualities. They are learning how to meet the subtlest and most dangerous foe of humanity —the tyranny that wears the mask of humanitarianism and benevolence. They are attacking Leviathan.

II. Two Interpretations of American History

F. J. Turner's original statement, in 1893, of the importance of the frontier has been called "the most famous and influential paper in American historiography." "The existence of an area of free land," said Turner, "its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.... The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic Coast, it is the great West."

The thesis was bold in its challenge to the parochialism of Eastern historians who had neglected the frontier or had studied it with little attempt to estimate the fundamental importance of the various migrations through which America had been peopled. It was so obvious a thesis, too, and it was so brilliantly and persuasively argued that it gained ready currency, even in the startled East. To the rising school of historians, especially the energetic Westerners, it seemed to offer the key to American history: what was most peculiar, most American, what was indeed unique in American development—all grew out of the prime fact of an advancing frontier, and its effect upon the character of the people and upon the great issues arising in economic and political fields. The enthusiastic historians carried the theory far. Sometimes they seemed more like myth-makers than historians. The typical American, they seemed to argue, was a Westerner; the typical

America was the West, or at least the Middle West. The pioneer was in a fair way to replace Parson Weems's Washington. The state that could count only fifty years of history, or less, was, by that very fact, a more interesting historical object than the state that could count three hundred years.

It is incredible, but it is true, that we have had to wait forty years after the promulgation of Turner's thesis to discover that it meant both a good deal less and a good deal more than it has been taken to mean. One of the first challenges to Turner's thesis has come, as we might expect, from the East. In Benjamin F. Wright's essay, "Political Institutions and the Frontier," the challenge takes the form of a narrow question of fact: Did the frontiersmen, after all, develop something new on the face of the earth (a frontier "culture," so to speak), or did they merely duplicate, in their new environment, the institutions, especially the constitutional forms of government, with which they were already familiar? With respect to political institutions merely, Mr. Wright's case holds—at least it holds well enough to shatter either the extreme pro-Western myth of the complete and almost mystical conditioning influence of the frontier upon instruments of government or the extreme pro-Eastern view (to be discovered, for example, in Van Wyck Brooks) of the innate depravity and barbarity of the frontier influence. But such questions only obscure the real issue. Wright mentions, but makes little out of another point, where the real issue at last comes into the foreground. The truth is that Turner's thesis implied from the beginning much more than the frontier theme. It implied the differentiation of the settled areas into sections or regions as soon as they had passed through a colonial stage and become stable or, in another and mature sense, settled parts of the American nation.

It now seems that Turner recognized, sooner than his belated Eastern critics, the full meaning of his thesis. Probably

he could see, as readily as we can see now, that his earliest statement of the significance of the West was, in part, a bit of sectional rationalization. The great West had been neglected; still worse, it had been snubbed by being accorded a niggardly and inferior status by the very men who ought to know better, the historians; its role in the making of American civilization had been misunderstood and underestimated. And Turner, a Westerner, who, in acquiring the Easterner's technique of historical research, had not acquired with it the Easterner's concept of American history, found himself in a position to right the balance. In a sense the man and the hour had met, since the eighteen-nineties, which marked the conquest of the last physical frontier, also marked the arrival of the states of the new Northwest to full consciousness of the fact that they, too, no less than the now discredited South, had become a section which must fight a sectional battle. Turner, in his quiet way, was as much a phenomenon of the times as Bryan.

It might be proper to say that Turner's disciples, rather than Turner himself, exaggerated the importance of the pure frontier thesis. At any rate, as early as 1904 (eleven years after his announcement of the frontier thesis) Turner was saying in his paper on "Problems in American History" that America is "a complex of physiographic sections"; that "American sectionalism has been very inadequately dealt with by our historians"; and that "the American physical map may be regarded as a map of potential nations and empires, each to be conquered and colonized, each to rise through stages of development, each to achieve a certain social and industrial unity, each to possess certain fundamental assumptions, certain psychological traits, and each to interact with the others, and in combination to form that United States, the explanation of which is the task of the historian." The whole later theory of sectionalism is here in essence.

It is also clearly implied in a still earlier paper on "Western State-Making," and it comes out strongly in Turner's book *The Rise of the West*. As early as 1907, Turner was asking the question, "Is sectionalism dying away?" and was answering the question in the negative—this at the time when the popular answer was more strongly in the affirmative than it had been in fifty years.

The evidence suggests that Turner knew, almost from the outset, that the study of the frontier was only a step in the unfolding of a larger problem: in his own phrase, the significance of the sections; and that this larger thesis was part, in turn, of a still larger one. His larger thesis was being worked out while the subordinate one was being explored and to a great extent over-argued by his followers. Some of his papers on sectionalism were published and his voice was being heard even while the popularity of the frontier thesis was at its height. But a generation had gone by, and Turner had gone, too, before the fruit of his studies came to light in the posthumous books: *The Significance of the Sections in United States History* (1932) and *The United States, 1830-1850* (1935). Why the preliminary stages of his inquiry, which dealt with the successive advances of the frontier, should have received prolonged emphasis to the exclusion of the later studies can only be explained by saying that the time was not ripe. The mind of the historians, like that of the public, was not prepared for it. The early nineteen-hundreds were years of prosperity, when the nation, with the wine of McKinley imperialism in its veins, seemed to be consolidating itself into unity at home while it expanded its domain by conquest abroad. Even the South, that most persistent example of sectionalism, seemed quiet and pliable. Then came Wilson, with a program of domestic reform, quickly superseded by the wave of extreme nationalism which arose with the Great War. The unorthodoxy of the frontier

theory was exciting but in its social and political aspect not in the least disturbing. It had, indeed, a spice of adventure in it; it created slogans; it catered definitely to one popular phase of the idea of American nationality. It was not really unorthodox at all, for it only re-embodied one of the earliest and most persistent of American pretensions. The notion of sectionalism as an entirely respectable and serious factor in American history was, however, unorthodox in the extreme sense. There was no time from 1900 to 1930 when it would have been welcomed (in any section but the South) as offering anything that expressed the official attitudes of Americans about their national life. But by 1930 the national scene had changed, and the national temper with it. For the first time since the War Between the States Americans were forced to reconsider the terms on which the nation might endure. Turner's hour had come again, and though he was in his grave, and his study of sectionalism existed only in the shape of several scattered essays and one incompleted book, the outline was there, and there were eyes ready, this time, to see it.

In Turner's view the moving frontier accounts for only one kind of sectionalism, which in its first manifestation is a temporary phenomenon, but which, of course, leaves a more or less permanent cultural deposit; and this, in turn, contributes to an organic sectionalism which receives its character from many and various factors occurring early and late and which is persistent—is, indeed, the condition, or one of the prime essentials, of nationality. It is evident that in general historical theory Turner is a dualist who views the extension of human culture as a process of differentiation that goes on within the wider but much less predictable process of unification. His chief interest is in the differentiating process, possibly because his temperament led him to think

that, without differentiation as the condition of unification, no unification could be obtained within the limits of democratic tradition.

Thus, from the first establishment of the American colonies to the final closing of the frontier, American society in any given place may be viewed as passing through several stages. There is first the stage of colonial dependency, when the unit of settlers is only a weak extension of the mother country. It was a characteristic of the English colonies that all of them had, from the beginning, a greater or less degree of self-reliance, even of defiance, and thus were not, like the French colonies, simply outposts of empire. A good deal of their sturdiness came from this very fact. Yet they were, nevertheless, economically and politically dependent in large measure, and their self-reliance in the early stages was a matter of a slowly developing temper rather than a selfconscious and practical move toward independence. Selfconsciousness comes in the second stage, when the colony, while still a colony, and still repeating and imitating the cultural patterns of the mother country, begins to aspire to a degree of self-determination; the colony has grown up into a self-conscious state or section which feels its strength; but what it contends for at first is equality rather than independence; and this, of course, as England discovered in 1776, is the critical stage of an imperial polity. For it is then essential that a *modus vivendi* be set up if conflict is to be avoided. If it is not avoided, and a clash occurs, then the third stage will be either independence or, in the event of an imperial victory, a new slump into colonialism. The American colonies achieved independence, and then went on in their turn to imperialize among themselves. The Southern states, though not occupying the same relation toward the North, precisely, that the American colonies occupied toward England, fought against the threat, if not the actuality, of domestic imperial-

ism, and, losing their fight, relapsed into a semi-colonial relation.

Such an analysis is an interpretation, or an application, rather than a summary statement of Turner's view. His studies clearly imply the three stages enumerated above, but he himself was attempting to define, through his study of sectionalism, another form of the third phase. This phase is best understood when the course of events in America is contrasted with what has gone on in Europe. The United States, with their Federal system, which is in effect a sectional union, have developed a technique of compromise and legislative adjustment that permits the matured sections a kind of unofficial autonomy. But in Europe, separatism went on unchecked after the tradition of a united Christendom collapsed. There was no Federal principle, there was indeed nothing short of conquest to bind together the ever more sharply differentiated portions. They became "nationalistic" nations, and have spent the years of their maturity in an unceasing struggle for power; and the more they contend, the further they get from achieving any sort of union.

The development of sectionalism as an outgrowth of the westward moving frontier occupies about the first century of United States history. At all times during these first hundred years there might be found sections in various stages of development. In the seventeen-eighties and seventeen-nineties the trans-Appalachian settlements had already entered the first phase of exploration and colonial dependency; but their separatist tendency, even this early, was so strong that they already exhibited the typical bellicosity of West toward East. Their struggle for equality did not really get into full swing until the time of Jackson, forty years later. At the same time, the original thirteen states of the eastern seaboard were themselves divided into a New England, a Middle States, and a South, and thus all the typical sectional divisions were already

forecast while the Republic was in its infancy. The North-South sectionalism, indeed, was to figure as an element in the frontier itself, for the West was speedily to become, in Turner's phrase, "a field of contest for power between the rival Atlantic sections." But the trans-Mississippi West, in its turn, was soon to resent "the conception that it was merely an emanation from a rival North and South," and by the time of the Populist revolt it was ready to make its own bid for sectional reciprocity. The time of the Populist revolt was also the moment when, as Turner noted in his first famous paper, the last frontier was being settled up and officially closed.

Thus we have, as an important feature of American history, a "migratory sectionalism" which moves westward as the frontier moves from the meridian of Boston and Charleston to the meridian of Cincinnati and Nashville, and on, successively, to the Mississippi, the Great Plains, and beyond. At every point in the process the newly settled areas show the same characteristics: they begin as debtor, agricultural or at least rural areas, sparsely settled, but ebullient and contentious, resenting the condescension of the East, and translating their resentment into one form or another of social action as they reach maturity and strive to end their dependency. At the same time they themselves have in many ways taken on the complexity of the longer established Eastern order, so that their old formula of the rights of man against the rights of property is no longer quite adequate to their situation. And so the sectionalism of the "migratory" order tends to disappear. The westward movement has left definite marks, both on the temper of the people and on institutions; it has been an instrument for transporting and fixing types of society and certain blends or special types of population in various areas under various conditions. But this alone, though it is an American inheritance, bound to

have a continued influence, is not sufficient to account for the sectionalism which persists even after the frontier is gone and a degree of uniformity of culture and interests prevails throughout the nation.

This kind of sectionalism is really organic and may be expected to last permanently. The more stable society becomes in the United States, the more likely it is to fix its characteristic differentiations and attitudes. It arises, first of all, from the geography of the United States. The matter of sheer size itself is of importance. We are a nation occupying a continental area. The distance between Charleston, South Carolina, and the west coast is comparable, Turner points out, to the distance between Constantinople and the west coast of Spain; and the distance from our northern to our southern border is comparable to the distance between the Baltic coast and the island of Sicily. Area itself thus is a separative factor. And though space may be annihilated in a sense by the swift communications that represent an ingenious American method of overcoming the problem, the communications do not necessarily represent a bond.

Communications have more to do, after all, with time than with space. They do not destroy the physiographic areas into which the country is spatially divided. These, as mapped by the physiographer, do not correspond with complete strictness to the divisions that would be drawn by the student of political sectionalism. Nevertheless their role is organic and permanent, for they have been the seats of environmental influences which have determined the economics and, to some extent, the culture of the political sections. Their influence is two-fold, since they both unite and divide a given section. The Southeast, for example, centers on an agriculture of cotton and tobacco for which soil and climate adapt it; but in its blue-grass regions general farming holds sway, while the Piedmont goes in for manufacturing and the Appalachian

mass remains almost a frontier region. Thus the physiographic regions establish subsections, or sections of sections. At the same time, in its general physiography, even with all the prevailing variety, the Southeast is set off as a single complex unit from the climate and soils of the Northeast or of the Middle West. The geographic variations within the United States are sufficiently notable to encourage a tendency to divide along geographic lines. This tendency to divide geographically is strengthened by the tendency of population stocks to concentrate within definite areas, and to foster within those areas the cultural preferences to which they are accustomed. Thus we have a Southeast, with its basic English and Scotch-Irish stock, its large percentage of Negroes, and its relatively slight admixture of Scandinavian and German, and of South Europeans; and the Northeast, with its basic English stock, now interfused with Irish, Italian, and Slavic; and the Middle West, with its negligible percentage of Negroes.

The character of a section is thus determined by its permanent physiographic situation, and by its less permanent, but persistent, population features, and interwoven with these are attitudes remaining from frontier experience, the whole tending to establish a definite sectional culture within geographic boundaries. Some of these sectional characteristics are imponderable and almost indeterminate; they are sectional attitudes, and have to do with the way in which people live and feel and think. They are, in the broadest and best sense, folkways. Others are definite, and take a political cast. They are best described politically, for it is in politics that the pressures which divide or unite a people finally take shape. So, while one set of causes for organic and permanent sectionalism lies in the field of geography and the social sciences that now are in effect extensions of history, another group of causes may best be studied in the political field.

Politically defined, sectionalism in the United States is the tendency of groups of states, bound in physical contiguity and joined by social and economic ties, to think more or less in common and, upon occasion, to act in common. The occasions when such action has occurred are not limited, by any means, to the one notable conflict of the sixties when the Northeast and the West combined to defeat the South. The bargain between Jefferson and Hamilton, by which Hamilton conceded the location of a national capital at Washington in return for Jefferson's support in his program for the assumption of state debts, was one of the first occasions when the states of the agrarian South asserted themselves against the commercial North. Later the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions expressed a revolt of the South and West against a Federalist Northeast; and soon the Jeffersonian triumph provoked sectional resistance in the Northeast which found expression in the Essex Junto and Hartford Convention. The rise to power of Andrew Jackson signalized a sectional movement which represented in some respects an East vs. West division, rather than a North vs. South division. Nevertheless, during the same period, with the agitation over the tariff and the rise of abolitionism we see the beginning of Calhoun's sharp definition of the sectional issue between the North and South, with the states of the Old Northwest holding the balance of power in the long argument and the fight which followed it. After the war came the vigorous forward movement of the trans-Mississippi West, eventuating, when the South regained political status, in the abortive attempt of the Populists to break down Northeastern domination by a union of West and South. The consummation of this union, foiled at the time of its outbreak under Bryan, was partially realized under Theodore Roosevelt, a Northeastern president who was somewhat responsive to western influences. It was more fully realized with the election of Woodrow Wilson, but

domestic reform was postponed by the World War, and, after an interlude when the Northeast resumed its sway, the sectional union of South and West appeared in a more violent political form, which broke old party lines, in the 1932 election of Franklin Roosevelt.

Thus American history can be viewed, not as a series of events in which a unified national development, proceeding from an acknowledged center, is majestically unrolled, but as a series of sectional clashes, often bordering on violence and in one case actually resulting in war, but more often working out through sectional compromises, like the Missouri Compromise, or the Compromise of 1850, or in the "gentlemen's agreement" of 1876, when the Southern states in effect conceded the election of Hayes in return for a cessation of military rule. The phenomenon of which these clashes and compromises are manifestations is sectionalism, no matter how assiduously historians or politicians may veil its appearance under one or another sort of euphemism.

In the entire history of the United States there have rarely been "national" issues which were national in the sense that they cut uniformly across sectional lines and divided voters strictly according to predilections of class or according to some general philosophy of politics and economics. Even foreign wars, which might be deemed most productive of a unity of national feeling, or a non-sectional division of opinion, have brought out disproportionate sectional advocacy or disproportionate sectional opposition. The War of 1812 and the Mexican War were unpopular in New England. The Spanish-American War and the World War may be viewed in retrospect as wars in which the Northeast had a special interest. In the Spanish-American War it was a question, at first, whether the McKinley administration would receive hearty Southern support; and American participation in the World War was long opposed in the Middle West.

Other issues, though nationally debated and agitated, have been more clearly sectional issues: the tariff, internal improvements, the United States Bank, the quarrel over slavery in the territories, the income tax, popular election of senators, and, in a later day, "agrarian" legislation and minimum wage laws come readily to mind as issues in which the sectional interest colors or dominates the national interest. Even in highly abstract issues the sectional interest appears: the woman suffrage amendment had little following in the Southern states; on the other hand, the more current question of Federal aid for education finds the South in support and the East in opposition.

No matter how the party lines may extend over the national area, so as to attract support for one section from the voters of another section, the foci of agitation are sectional in origin, and the measures advocated or resisted interest one section more than another. The national political parties, knowing this, calculate where their strength and weakness lie, and do their utmost to win the support of the areas, generally a section or sections, which may hold the balance of power. There is no other nation in the Western world in which sectional alignment on major questions so often occurs. Turner, finding this to be the case, made election maps the basis of his study of the outlines of political sectionalism and of the persistence of sectionalism into recent times.

Although the ultimate cause of sectionalism may be difference in cultures, with their interrelated economic, geographic, population, and religious and social elements, it is evident that the form of our government is itself both a powerful contributing cause of sectionalism and a check upon it. Under the Constitution the sections have no official channels of expression as sections. But when strong sectional interests develop these must find expression somehow. Since they cannot be dealt with officially, they assume a mask. In

the arguments preceding the sixties, state sovereignty was the mask of sectionalism. Turner observes that state sovereignty, considered aside from its theoretical status, was never actually effective until the particular state or states asserting sovereignty formed a sectional combination. This Calhoun perceived, after the practical failure of South Carolina's nullification program; but though he rationalized and stated the principle involved, he was not the only sectional statesman to perceive the fact and make use of it; the others were more quiet in their procedure.

But the mask of state sovereignty is less important in national history, because it is less efficacious than the other great mask: the mask of national pretensions, or the use of the Federal mechanism itself as the disguise of a sectional program. When we look back upon American history, we can see that the Southern states, in the conflict of the eighteen-sixties, were the only sectional combination which ever gave up hope of gaining sectional ends through the national government. That they were driven at last into secession indicates the desperateness of the plight in which they felt they had been put by the appropriation of the Federal mechanism by a rival sectional combination. At all other times, the struggle between the sections has been a contest for supremacy in the Federal government, and the victorious section has fostered, by means of the Federal mechanism, the kind of national program that suited its sectional ideas and purposes. The results of this procedure have been both good and bad. Under Jefferson, and the Virginia dynasty succeeding him, sectional domination of the government under Southern auspices preserved the economic *status quo* under which the Republic had been established, and fixed the form and temper of that government. But the sectional domination of the Northeast for the seventy years following the War Between the States took on an exploitative character and can only

be described as a form of sectional imperialism, with the other sections having, in greater or less degree, the status of colonial regions dominated by an imperial or capital region. Sectional imperialism is in fact the form which disguised sectionalism, operating under the Federal mask, is always likely to assume; and since this sectionalism is certain, in turn, to provoke retaliation and reaction, leading to sectional imperialism under new auspices, it is necessary to declare the Federal government, especially in its later, "consolidated" form, as one of the chief agents of sectionalism. And, we might add, the more consolidated it becomes (and hence the more insistent upon fitting the sections of the United States, regardless of their differentiations and diverse interests, to the procrustean bed of one law for all alike), the more severe the pressure for sectional action will become, and the greater the possibility of disunion.

In Turner's mild view, this possibility seemed remote. On the whole he must have felt that the American genius for improvisation and adjustment, which has tided us over many difficulties, could be counted on to furnish the American equivalent of British "muddling through." The Federal arrangement, as originally constituted, with its subsequent amendments, he deemed flexible enough to provide for national needs while allowing considerable play to sectional forces. Such at least is the inference to be drawn from phrases here and there in his studies—they are phrases only, for he made no comments upon the possible failure of the Federal mechanism, or upon the possibility of its ultimate seizure by nationalizing forces of an extreme character. Even when he holds that sectionalism is not dying away—that it rather will continue to resist even the nationalizing tendencies evident in the advance of large scale, industrial economics—he is content to say that sectionalism will continue to "shape political action *underneath the forms of nationalism*." (Italics

mine.) Presumably it will exert its influence as before—"by mere opposition in public opinion on the part of a given area, or by formal protest, or by combining its votes in Congress and in presidential elections"; and these means of resistance to uniformity will be backed by "those manifestations of economic and social separateness involved in the existence in a given region of a set of fundamental assumptions, a mental and emotional attitude which segregates the section from other sections or from the nation as a whole." He adds, however, that such sectional influences may be "potential bases for forcible resistance." But this statement lacks a full recognition of the fact that the national forms themselves will often be pseudo-national or sectional: it views sectionalism too much as a kind of local resistance.

Perhaps there is some implication in Turner's studies that the practical reconcilement of nationalism with sectionalism is the ultimate governmental problem of the United States, if they are to continue as a democracy, under republican forms. Turner's weakness is that he has not fully studied, or at least not fully documented his study of the particular form of sectional imperialism that ruled the United States in the seventy-odd years after Appomattox. In temper he belongs to hopeful times prior to 1930. He would not have liked to think that his beloved West might become a pawn in the great game of sectional imperialism, and that it might have to adopt a sectionalism closely resembling the secessionist spirit of the Old South in order to fight a nationalizing influence of a more sweeping, and seemingly irresistible character than anything out of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century days to which he gave such careful attention. Marxian terminology had not yet become a commonplace in urban parts of the United States before Turner's death, nor had the Great Depression and the reign of the totalitarian state in Europe advanced far beyond preliminary stages.

Thus he hardly did more than indicate the nature of the forces that sectionalism would have to outlast, if it should continue to be a feature of American life.

The nature of those forces is fully described in the works of the historians of the economic determinist school. In their works, rather than in the scattered historical papers which criticize Turner's position directly, we find the philosophy of American history which is the opposite of Turner's, and which therefore is, by general implication as well as by frequent affirmation, at once the criticism of Turner's interpretation and the alternative to it.

Historians of the economic determinist school either ignore sectionalism in their preoccupation with other phenomena which interest them more, or, with somewhat greater honesty, they allow it a minor role, and give the major role to all that seems to them inevitably to make for centralized and all but perfect nationalism. To cite two distinguished examples, Arthur Meier Schlesinger is of the type that ignores; and Charles A. Beard is of the type that mentions sectionalism only to dismiss it, as a temporary and rather insignificant obstacle in the onward march of something called civilization.

Schlesinger's *New Viewpoints in American History,* long a favorite textbook, as well as a begetter of favorite textbooks, in American educational institutions, carries on its title-page a quotation from an address by Turner. But this is only lip-service. Turner's theory of sectionalism is not deemed worth including among the new viewpoints. In a book of about 300 pages a total of 14 pages is devoted to the specific problem of sectionalism. Even this brief discussion is tied up with the discussion of slavery and secession. (In the index, the reference for sectionalism reads: "See slavery.") This bit of condescending and reluctant discussion is but a minor part of a large chapter entitled "Economic Influences in

American History," which begins with a reference to Karl Marx and closes with the observation that "present-day politics is very largely the resultant of a complex of economic and social forces." And the book is, indeed, devoted to those forces, viewed always in terms of some fairly irresistible movement which is on the side of progress. In Schlesinger's far better balanced book, *Political and Social History of the United States: 1829-1925,* sectionalism is again coupled with slavery and secession, in such chapters as those entitled "Slavery and Sectionalism" and "The Undoing of the Sectional Truce, 1852-1856." No prominence is given to the sectional motif before or after this period, and the student is left to infer that while there may have been, in the early nineteenth century, traces of sectionalism which developed into the great aberration of the eighteen-sixties, all such errors were expunged in the years of Grant, Mark Hanna, Roosevelt I, and Harding. The results of the War Between the States are deemed on the whole beneficent, since not only were the slaves made free, but also the economic forces were unshackled to do their kindly work. In commenting on the significance of war and reconstruction Schlesinger specifically says:

> It is impossible to believe that questions of nullification and secession will ever again seriously disturb the domestic politics of the United States, notwithstanding the fact that since the Civil War the national power has expanded beyond the dreams of a Marshall or a Webster. The problem of American nationality remains, but in a new, though perhaps not less portentous, form. In this more recent phase, it has to do with the preservation of national unity in the face of the clashing interests of economic classes and of unassimilated immigrant groups in our population.

This makes Schlesinger a Marxian, in all but open profession, and we hardly need the assurance of his introduction to the effect that the "great dynamic currents which have shaped the nation's life" have been and are: the growth of

nationality; the struggle for greater democracy; changes in methods of production and distribution; striving for social amelioration and humanitarian reform; and the expansion of national boundaries. These five major forces are no more than extensions of similar forces operating in Western Europe, which—in the works of historians like Schlesinger—is always dimly assumed as the *fons et origo* of all social forces. Thus American life becomes international life; American history is simply a trans-Atlantic phase of a general and irresistible social-economic process. In his later, more specialized study, *The Rise of the City,* the theme is the same. Schlesinger can say, of the period of the eighteen-nineties, that "as the Northern manufacturing system extended southward, fundamental economic antagonisms began to disappear, new ties of interest emerge"; and the book ends with a prophecy of an urban civilization dominating rural America.

The fine flower of economic determinist history, however, is better exemplified in the works of Charles A. Beard, where an acknowledgment of the potency and uniqueness of sectionalism in American history is simply a matter of occasional embroidery upon the great theme of a steadily developing Leviathanism. In dealing with the most pronounced sectional conflict in American history, Beard examines and dismisses one by one the causes usually cited for the war between North and South. Was slavery the cause? No, there was never, even in the North, a majority opinion favoring the abolition of slavery. Was it state sovereignty? No. "If the Southern planters had been content to grant tariffs, bounties, subsidies, and preferences to Northern commerce and industry, it is not probable that they would have been molested in their most imperious proclamations of sovereignty." Was it a matter, then, of strict and liberal interpretations of the Constitution? No. "The modern student . . . can hardly do otherwise than conclude that the linguistic devices used first

on one side and then on the other were not derived from inherently necessary concepts concerning the intimate essence of the Federal system." What, then, was the cause? "The roots of the controversy lay elsewhere—in social differences, in climate, soil, industries, and labor systems, in divergent social forces."

The implications of such passages, in *The Rise of American Civilization,* seem to lead straight to Turner's theory of sectionalism. And, in fact, Beard speaks definitely enough of the three great sections which, in the sixties, for all their common language, religion, law, and basic culture, had evolved real distinctions "woven out of the tough facts of daily existence." He emphasizes the fact that the distinctions followed geographic lines; they were not the familiar, minor distinctions diffused through the body of any large civilized community. Such a situation, he says, had never arisen before "in the history of human society." "No European country had ever had a highly developed group of capitalists [the East], a large body of independent farmers [the West] and a powerful landed aristocracy [the South] each to a marked degree segregated into a fairly definite geographical area."

If this rather simplified description be accepted as correct, then why does Beard not go on to say that the final and all-important reason for the impasse of war was that the quarreling sections had to live under a political instrument, which, while fostering sectionalism, provided no means of dealing with it? Why does he not say that the Constitution, although it served admirably as long as parties were roughly national and the division of voters cut across sections, failed when the majority vote concentrated in two sections and the minority vote in a third section? And why does he not observe that this defect, conceivably, might continue to operate even after the defeat of the Southern Confederacy?

The reason for this significant omission lies apparently

in Beard's conception that the study of American history is in essence a study of the gradual emergence and final dominance of the idea of the Great Society, organized under a single, complex, but strong and highly centralized national government, motivated ultimately by men's desire for economic welfare of a specific kind rather than their desire for personal liberty. "Merely by the accidents of climate, soil, and geography," he says, was the so-called Civil War a sectional struggle. It was, in the Roman sense, "a social war." It was as revolutionary in character as the English Puritan Revolution and the French Revolution. It was, indeed, the "Second American Revolution," or "in a strict sense, the First." And the real revolutionists were not the seceding Southerners, but the unionists of North and West who were in tune with "the flowing substance of things limned by statistical reports on finance, commerce, capital, industry, railways, and agriculture." It was less a battle between sections contending for Federal power than it was a struggle between two conceptions of nationalism—one, the Southern conception (which was not without its support outside the seceding states), a disappearing conception, which fought "against the census returns" and must inevitably go down, war or no war, before the overwhelming logic of economic events; the other, a new and upcoming conception, long suppressed and delayed by tedious eighteenth-century metaphysics about the rights of man and the meaning of constitutions—the conception, in short, of an industrial society which, after a process of trial and error under private management, must inevitably move on to a more highly coöperative and socialized form.

The triumph of this conception, with its applications in American government and society, is the dominating theme of all of Beard's historical books and papers that deal with the America of 1865 to date. For Beard, American history

from the advent of the "Second American Revolution" to our own day is merely a study of the transformation of the American mind and institutions under the inexorable pressure of the economic forces of the machine age; and that transformation, according to Beard, is steadily, unremittingly in the single direction of a centralized political economy operating with uniform force upon a continental area—or indeed upon a world area, in which the American scene is hardly to be distinguished from the European scene. One might think that a skillful historian like Beard, with the well-ordered results of a manifold historical research available to him, would at least have fortified his position by reviewing any evidence that might contradict or modify his general thesis, and by at least a notice, if not a refutation, of conflicting theories. The more catholic Turner, while setting forth his own theory of sectionalism, does not hesitate to speak of "the countervailing tendencies toward national uniformity" and to examine them with respect.

But Beard does nothing of the kind. Neither in *The Rise of American Civilization* (published in 1927 and 1930) nor in later works does Beard so much as hint that sectionalism has continued to operate either as a negative or a positive force. In his history the Solid South remains as a fleeting relic, a kind of fossil remainder of other days, soon to be completely unsolidified; but the solidity of the East receives no attention either under the head of geology or politics. By a feat of historical magic akin to the conjurer's art, sectional differentiations, antagonisms, and conflicts are deftly whisked out of sight; and by a grand optical illusion we behold the economic forces materialized like sudden vapors out of spaceless, timeless elements, and set free from their old association with geography, local tradition, and local purpose. The financial East, the yeoman-farmer West, the agrarian South, of which Beard spoke in earlier pages, have

disappeared and in their place we behold simply Democratic and Republican parties, or financial, industrial, agrarian, and laboring interests: in other words, we have simply the terminology of pure economic history, of a European cast, applied vigorously and poetically to the American scene.

Not one word does Beard say to indicate that the financial buccaneering of the Gilded Age was a phase of Northeastern imperialism, unleashed, by the collapse of the Southern Confederacy, to work its will upon America. Not a word, either, on the sectional character of the protective tariff, or on the fact that the measures sponsored by the Populist revolt (the income tax, the currency inflation, the direct election of Senators, and the like) were sectional protests, emanating from West and South, against Eastern control. By the exercise of his magical terminology these efforts become no more than the wrath of the little against the big, the outcry of democracy against plutocracy. The historian of centralism can discuss the enormous centralized "spread" of manufacturing, business, invention, and standardization, without ever disclosing to the innocent reader where the center is located from which the spread took place. He can discuss the importance of the American Federation of Labor without ever noting that its membership was concentrated in the East. He can relate with pride the triumphant march of public education and woman suffrage without indicating the geography of their march, and can speak of the prohibition amendment without describing its popularity in South and West and its extreme unpopularity in the metropolitan, immigrant-filled regions of the East. There is nothing in Beard to indicate that Morgan represented Eastern capital; that Bryan was the spokesman of the defiant West, tired of its bad bargain; or that the election of Wilson was achieved by means of a sectional alignment. There is nothing to indicate that a sectional interpretation of the rise of American civilization is possible, or can be entertained

by a respectable and serious student of history. In the 1600 pages of Beard's most representative and most influential book, there are but two slight references to Turner, totalling six or eight lines, and these have to do with his interpretation of the frontier, and they are couched in condescending terms, as of the realist who notices, even while he deplores, the insignificant notions of a romantic inferior.

Such historical interpretation is propaganda, or it is poetry; it is not, with such wholesale and needless omissions, history of the exact, scrupulous, and scientific order which we are taught to think is the ideal of the research scholar. Viewed in the light of its limitations, it seems little more than a fable erected upon a substructure of fact. We can remind ourselves, if we wish, that Beard's epic has a great deal more of actual historical fact in it than either *Beowulf* or the *Iliad*. It would matter little, save for purposes of academic comparison, if it were not for the circumstances that the most popular common school histories of the twentieth century have either been written by Beard himself or have emanated from the school of Beard, while Turner's work on sectionalism has not, as yet, taken its place as a staple of instruction anywhere but in the arcane and quiet seclusion of history seminars. A generation of American children have grown up and gone into public life believing, if they believed what they found in history textbooks, that the United States are developing, with hardly any local check to uniform progress, toward a social democracy governed under the Law of the One; they have been left to discover the Law of the Many, if they discover it at all, only when they emerge from the spell of Beard's linguistic patterns into the vulgar reality of an America that bends or breaks the Law of the One to serve the needs of the Many.

If Turner's history can be viewed, in the cold light of Eastern criticism, as a rationalization of the provincial Western-

er's romantic dream of power and place, Beard's history, with equal justice—perhaps with more justice—can be taken as a rationalization of the economic imperialism of the Northeast, for it is a description of the kind of nation that harmonizes with Northeastern advantages and predilections. Whether that Northeast be tory and plutocratic, or radical and socialistic, makes no difference, so long as the emphasis is on the One Law, with that Law shaped in a Northeastern quarter. It is foolish to discount Turner's theory as rationalization without giving the economic historians an equally severe discount.

Perhaps an absolutely dispassionate historical critic might be able to assay the two views, so as to distinguish in each its good and bad qualities, its relative mixture of dream-vision and honest historical science, and then go on to make the historical compound that would serve as our philosopher's stone, transmuting all our baseness. An observer lacking celestial insight can only set the two views side by side, and, choosing one view, allow decently liberal concessions to the other. In such a comparison, Turner would seem to represent, on the whole, an American and democratic interpretation of American history, which takes into consideration old and well established American preferences, emanating both from inheritance and environment, as well as the economic compulsions of a modern age. And Beard, on the whole, represents a late-European, anti-traditional view of all society, including the American, as organizing itself, at first slowly, then with breathless rapidity, around the sole motive of economic welfare of a special type, viewed in the light of industrial economics alone. Turner's view assumes the continuity of multiple traditions within one general tradition; it looks to the land and the people as forming, within nature, a stable, if not permanent, historical factor, leading to a more or less permanent diversity. Beard's view assumes discontinuity, and

the impermanence of all factors except the economic; it holds that when once phenomena are left behind chronologically, they cease to operate; it holds that the land and the people are malleable, and it makes no concession to nature; but while it assumes discontinuity, in respect to the eighteenth-century "horse and buggy" traditions of the American past, it nevertheless seems to assume that the industrial economics of the present age are permanent, not discontinuous, not subject to any conceivable mortal change. Turner stands for a flexible, decentralized society, allowing the maximum of tolerance, within the national government, for divergencies of interest; Beard stands for extreme centralization, for conformity to one type of economic interest, and hence for the minimum of tolerance for any sort of divergencies. Turner speaks for the oldest and sturdiest American aspirations: the idea of freedom, because of which Americans turned their backs on Europe and, even at cost to their economic welfare, insisted upon their separateness from Europe. Beard speaks for the late European idea of security at whatever cost; he reunites America and Europe, and prepares the way, under the name of democracy, for new forms of the tyrannies which Americans once sought the new world to escape. Turner is Jeffersonian; his is the voice of the inland and Pacific America of the South and West, and his following is to be found among the historians and men of letters from those sections. Beard is Hamiltonian; and his voice is the voice of the great cities of the Northeast, whose backs are toward inland America, and whose faces are toward the Atlantic and the manifold sorrows of Europe. Turner represents the Immovable Bodies of the great American problem; Beard, the Irresistible Forces.

III. Social Science Discovers Regionalism

The historian of the modern school is the broadest of social scientists. His new concern with the history of cultures rather than the chronology of governments makes him comprehend within his survey the findings not only of economics, but of sciences like sociology and demography and of the physical sciences upon which these are based—geography, physiography, ecology. When seen in this relationship, economics and sociology become, like political science, in effect branches of history. But the historians of our time have not yet labored to establish the terminology and the definitions involved in the study of the forces that Turner called sectional. That has been one of the chief concerns, of late, of the more specialized social sciences. From these we derive not only the terminology, but also a good deal of the theory of regionalism.

When the social scientist becomes, as he has lately become, an adviser of state, and passes from his surveys and seminars into the councils of government, he faces the problem of translating his findings into laws that will do their work satisfactorily and that will be accepted by the people whom they affect. This is the point at which the social scientist, no matter how unhistorical he may insist on being, must accept one of the two possible philosophies of American history, or else find some practical middle ground between them. If their numer-

ous writings may be taken as evidence of a view, the social scientists lean to Turner's interpretation of American history, but without committing themselves very deeply. For the sociologist, Turner's view is well-nigh inescapable, since sociology, as soon as it leaves its urban setting and goes to the countryside, quickly encounters the differentiations which are a fundamental part of its study of cultures and environments. Sociology is indeed in many ways the friend of differentiation, and it has been led by its allies, the geographers, the demographers, and the anthropologists, to make new and broad extensions of its studies of the varying cultures existing within the general pattern of American life. The economists have been slower to take the view that it was in the nature of sociology to accept, for economics, in modern times, has tended to assume that business is business, without respect to geography or tradition. But this view had to be altered, if by nothing else, by the economic crisis of the nineteen-thirties, which made it clear that economic disparities had in many ways a sectional outline. There was excessive poverty in one section, and excessive wealth in another; there were economic specializations, to which certain sections were committed; there were even specialized ways in which sections fitted into the scheme of international trade. One or two sections were dependent on a well developed export economy, and other sections were ready for the tightest variety of economic nationalism. And there was the problem of the NRA, which illustrated as nothing else could the extraordinary difficulty of making the entire United States subject to a centralized and uniform type of economic control. Probably it was the necessity of law-making above everything else that caused the experts to lay aside their old preoccupation with irresistible forces and acquaint themselves with the immovable bodies of American life. At any rate, the economists—except those of the strictest Marxian persuasion—have drifted away from

Beard somewhat in the direction of Turner, and are ready to take sectional differentiations into account. And the political scientists, who must "instrument" whatever is proposed, inevitably and properly are beginning to think and to plan in terms of these differentiations.

In discussing the sectional problem, the social scientist is reluctant to use the vocabulary of the historian. The terms *section* and *sectionalism* seem to him too schismatic and contentious for complete acceptance. The scientist wants a scientific term. He wants to escape the taint of war and confusion that hangs about the older words. The words *region* and *regionalism* suit his purpose better. They have a scientific background, since, as scientific terms, they originate in the studies of geologists and physiographers who have delimited physical regions according to soil, climate, and vegetation. Besides, the terms allow a sharper definition of function and a wider, more various range of description than the more political terms. There can be intra-state regions, and sub-regions that overlap boundaries; there can be metropolitan regions; there can be river-valley regions, cut-over regions, arid regions, manufacturing regions, corn-and-hog regions.

The discovery of regionalism thus provides social science with a form of scientific approach to an actual condition. Beyond that, it suggests, at least to the social scientist, a possibility of compromise. He can always say, and does frequently say, when he is examining some regional claim, that he is not indulging in sectionalism, but is merely, as scientist, investigating pertinent "regional factors." This is the road to a revised, more flexible and generous scheme of nationalism. It is a road which many excellent scientists appear inclined to take. At the same time, the professions of regionalism, like older professions of nationalism, may on occasion turn out to be a disguise for a servile sectionalism looking for national favors; or a mask for a "planned society" of a rigid type,

which studies regionalism only to discover ways of making the parts function with absolute precision within a totalitarian scheme.

The New Regionalism, as it has been called, had not made enough headway during the nineteen-twenties to achieve full respectability among the social scientists. The great survey of national trends undertaken by President Hoover's committee of social scientists, and finally issued under the title, *Recent Social Trends*, took little systematic notice of regional trends and characteristics, although its pages are full of data that invite a regional interpretation, and in certain chapters the regional problem is specifically touched.[1]

By 1930, however, active regional research was in full swing. Although this research was taking place everywhere in the nation, it went on most energetically, for the moment, in the South. One indication of the new activity was the appearance, chiefly from the press of the University of North Carolina, of a series of monographs which took special regional conditions out of the realm of surmise and debate and put them under the cool microscope of the social scientist. Of this order were the studies made by Clarence Heer, of income and wages; by T. J. Woofter, of the St. Helena Island culture; by Rupert Vance and Claudius Murchison, of the cotton culture; by S. H. Hobbs, of the economic and social differentia of North Carolina. These studies came at the time when the renascent Southern literature was growing into major importance. The quiet analytical approach of the social scientists was extended by the works of journalists like Clarence Cason and historians like Frank L. Owsley, B. B. Kendrick, and a host of others. At the same time, the twelve authors of *I'll Take My Stand* made a definitive restatement of the tradi-

[1] Notably in the chapters on "Communication Agencies and Social Life," by Malcolm Willey and Stuart A. Rice, and on "Government and Society," by C. E. Merriam.

tional Southern position, and began to argue the case with a vehemence and point that provoked a reconsideration of neglected sectional issues.

But the agrarian authors of *I'll Take My Stand*, while they sharpened every regional issue, did not call themselves regionalists—in fact, they did not at the time use the word *region*. The Southern theory of regionalism, as expressed in terms of social science, took form in two notable books, Rupert Vance's *Human Geography of the South* and Howard Odum's *Southern Regions*.

Both of these books, like the monographs and numerous unpublished studies which preceded them, and on which they were in part based, may be considered on one side the outgrowth of the determination of an organized body of social scientists (in this case, the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council—or, in other words, the Southern wing of a national organization) to come to grips with the regional problem by the use of the research method, applied over a long period, with the benefit of all the resources supplied by philanthropic foundations and educational institutions. On the other side, the energy that drove these works to rapid completion came from something more than scientific curiosity. The authors were regional spokesmen. In one sense they were themselves new manifestations of a sectional or regional spirit everywhere reaching for plausible ways of stating regional claims, and nowhere more boldly and anxiously than in the South. They also represented the half-puzzled, half-assured response of Americans to a crisis in domestic relations which at last compelled a new way of looking at the internal affairs of the nation. They were a part of the general reaction of the late nineteen-twenties and the nineteen-thirties against the centralizing drive of the irresistible forces.

Thus, while these studies "make a case" for the South, they also state the case of regionalism in general, by showing how

a regional approach may be utilized without resorting to nullification, or sectional bargaining behind the legislative scenes, or the old threat of secession. In them the Southerner may find his situation described in terms which on the whole correspond to his own intimate knowledge and feelings. His regional peculiarities and his regional claims are set forth in terms clearer than he might have imagined for himself, since the terms include both the situation and its causes, which in turn are balanced against the national situation and its claims and causes. The terms are not, of course, intended for the populace in general, but for advanced students, political experts, planners, and brain-trusters; yet they imply a process of re-education in regional terms, and they provide for forms of political action which must eventually be submitted to the judgment of the people. We may expect such studies to affect the sectional—or regional—consciousness of the South at the moment when debate is focussed upon concrete issues and political action takes place.

While the Southerner finds in the works of Vance and Odum a certain confirmation and support where, perhaps, he had least expected it, the American of another region may find a method of consideration which may be applied, with the proper adaptations, to his own regional situation. As yet there are few finished works from regions other than the South that parallel the works of Vance and Odum. There are of course numerous historical studies and books of travel and local culture depicting the "charm" of this or that spot.

Rupert Vance's *Human Geography of the South* is the first book written by a social scientist in which the working philosophy of the New Regionalism, as applied to one of the historic regions—or sections—of the United States, is broadly set forth. (Although Webb's *The Great Plains* can claim a year's priority in publication, it must be noted that Webb's important

book, though it has much meaning for the West in general, deals with a *stage* of regional development rather than with an established region, and does not define a philosophy of regionalism.) Vance's book is also notable as being the first comprehensive study, by a well-equipped social scientist, of the Southern conditions and problems that have been dismissed as anti-national, and hence unworthy of serious consideration, or that have been left to the interpretation of the politician or man of letters. The book is thus doubly important and doubly valuable. It is, in the best sense, an extraordinary piece of pioneering.

Vance's thesis is that "regionalism and the new geography afford a point of vantage" from which to view the South "as a test of human adequacy to master the resources of its region and to develop thereon a distinctive and competent culture." The opening chapter, "The Concept of the Region," makes plain the extent to which scientific regionalism rests upon the accumulated, but long neglected, or sometimes misdirected or misapplied, studies of the geographer, geologist, and ecologist. What makes the region a region is first of all the geographic factors that provide a natural setting in which animal and vegetable life are adapted to environment; and second, the cultural cycle or cycles produced by man's invasion of the natural scene. The second factor gives us "human geography," which is the science of human adjustment to environmental conditions. If man's life were as "natural" as a tree's life, then his culture could be delimited in pure physiographic terms, almost in geological terms; and the regions of the United States would be perfectly stable; they would be, for example, the regions described by Isaiah Bowman in *Forest Physiography*. If, on the other hand, man's mastery of his environment could be as thoroughgoing as H. G. Wells would like to think it is, there might be no regional differentiations whatever; human culture would be uniform throughout

the world. Neither of these extremes is possible; man both manipulates nature and is manipulated by it. We have then—to return to Vance's view—a classification, or differentiation, of regions according to human use, with that use resting ultimately on a relatively unchanging physical base; we have Le Play's formula: "place conditions work, work conditions the family organization, and the family is the social unit which makes up geography."

And at this point, too, we arrive at Turner's formula for the "evolution of frontier society in accordance with the conditions of the wilderness. . . . Physical and climatic *milieux* remaining constant, the regions change as the state of agriculture and of industry advance." The implication of this view is that, after such a process of settlement and social evolution as the United States have experienced, we attain at last a condition of relative stability: that is, the social state in which man has come as close to natural adaptation as he can be expected to do—it being granted, even by the geographer, that the intelligence which forms political and religious institutions may frequently interfere, at least temporarily, with adaptation.

Nevertheless, the human geographer's view is that "the region becomes the culture area characterized not only by common physical traits but by common culture traits." In the United States the culture cycles of various regions can be traced out: a New England, with a fishing-small-grain culture developing into an urban-industrial region; a South developing from a tobacco-indigo-rice culture into a cotton-slave culture and then into a cotton-tenant culture, with industrial markings here and there. Such regional developments, now somewhat fixed, lead to regional selfconsciousness in the arts and to a regional geography of politics, with even modern business itself re-emphasizing and strengthening the basic regional tendencies founded on physiography and natural

resources. For not only does business adapt itself to locale and so promote the development of "metropolitan regions" (which have a kind of official recognition in the map of Federal Reserve areas); but the ruthless exploitation of natural resources in time forces the State itself to step in with a regional governing policy. Reorganization of railroad systems and development of hydro-electric power are spheres of activity which must of necessity be regional. And the need of regional policies in government operations finds expression in the new types of regional geographic studies which form the background of land utilization policies.

The "concept of the region" in Vance's study, though limited as he says to "the social and demographic inter-relations of the geographic region," nevertheless emerges as the approved social-scientific approach to matters which have heretofore received only rough-and-ready consideration. Vance himself quotes Carl O. Sauer to the effect that the South is "a major cultural division of the United States, perhaps its most strikingly outstanding cultural unit." The South is indeed "different"—it is "set off" by "practically every cultural and demographic characteristic for which statistical indices can be obtained." Nevertheless, the South's intra-regional differentiations are just as striking as its unity. Politics made the South "solid"; geographic influences, reasserting themselves within the dimming political outline, bring it back to its old cultural variety. The Middle West is one region, both culturally and physically; the South, within its general cultural unity, is a complex of physical regions or subregions. To study the "profile of Southern culture" means a study of the many within the one—a delicate and difficult undertaking. The task, therefore, that Vance sets for himself is to study the characteristics and interrelations of the subregions: the Highlands, with their frontier heritage; the Delta and the Cotton Belt in general, with their plantation heritage; the

mingling of South and West beyond the Mississippi; the new industry of the Piedmont; the Piney Woods and other lesser regions; and, beyond these, the special factors of soil, climate, population, and, to some extent, historical background.

This detailed study leads finally to a synthesis in which the total regional economy is outlined. In the case of the South, the first conclusive fact for the human geographer is that, within a definitely marked regional area, the cultural cycle of human use has led to a "deficiency" in all the indices by which the modern social scientist measures economic welfare and substantial progress. The second item of interest is, naturally, the possible cause; and Vance concludes from his study of resource areas that the deficiency cannot be due to lack of "natural resources," which exist in plenitude, or to mere exhaustion in war and reconstruction, or to any inherent biological weakness. The cause is that the South as a region, having developed a regional culture of a distinctive order, has been driven by that very fact into a "colonial economy." Because of the "peculiar nature" of its agricultural economy and its cultural habits, the region is, to put the issue simply, at the mercy of the modern exploitative economy which has flourished elsewhere and which (though Vance does not say so) represents another kind of regional economy.

Vance also does not identify the exploiting agent. He is content to leave history and politics aside. It is enough for him, as scientist, to point out the fact, and then, in a final chapter, to suggest ways and means of ending the regional deficiency without changing the fundamental character of the regional culture. This is, he holds, the task for "regional planning."

Science is the pioneer, says Isaiah Bowman, in making things happen rather than waiting for them to happen. Regional planning may then be defined for our purpose as an attempt at coordination of all regional changes and readjustments toward a

desirable goal. This goal is determined after a consideration of both natural and cultural forces. Patrick Geddes and Victor Branford have advocated in their studies a frank acceptance of the Utopian approach to regional planning. Thus a survey of the region-as-is is followed by a blue print of the region as it can be reconstructed. This plan is drawn with reference mainly to the possibilities of the area's natural features at the hands of the engineering arts. The practical task of the regionalist is to fill in step by step the gap between the survey and the plan. In its scientific aspects regional planning leans heavily on the engineering arts and techniques; in its policy-making aspects it is part and parcel of the political process.

But "policy making is the task of statesmanship"; and social science, no matter how well developed its studies may be, waits upon statesmanship, or upon political leadership, which "notoriously lags far behind." Until political science has perfected an instrumentation, the regionalist can only go ahead privately as best he can, content for the moment to draw up his regional plan, and through it to win victories here and there by an eclectic process, ready with complete information when others have only opinions and conjectures, and ready to throw his strength behind any forms of healthy regional planning that may appear spontaneously.

There is a deceptive modesty about such declarations of the limited aims of the new regionalists in social science. A book like Vance's *Human Geography*—surely one of the most remarkable performances, both for its insight and its disinterested attitude, in our generation—and the temper and purposefulness of the various special investigations which lie behind it—these are already a form of statesmanship which needs only "instrumentation" to become policy making, or political action.

Indeed, Vance's book had hardly been published when the advent of the New Deal took the regional approach out of the field of speculation into actual performance. In his second

edition (issued, in 1935, three years after the initial publication) Vance could note in his preface that the "intervention of government in regional housekeeping" had already served to increase the prestige of regionalism as theory and working policy.

Howard Odum's *Southern Regions* carries out on an extended scale all the implications of Vance's study, but with an emphasis that gives further insight into the theory and purpose of regionalism. In one aspect, this vast array of organized data, representing the collaborative effort of an army of research workers directed by a sociological high command, is an extension of the "colonial economy" description given by Vance. We are given, down to the last minute detail, the record and the social result of Southern "deficiencies." The record, as record, is of a sort that no well-considered legislation can afford to pass by; and we may readily suppose, so far as the South alone is concerned, that the technique of the regional survey has here proved its worth and may be expected to bring results in some form of action, which probably will affect both Federal and State policy.

But the book has implications that go beyond the special regional advantages and disadvantages of the South. With a solicitude that is at times almost hortatory, Odum emphasizes the "regional-national" aspect of the survey. The regional survey of the Southern situation must be viewed by the suspicious as an example of a general method applied to a particular region, whose "culture and welfare are inseparable from the national civilization and prospect." There is, he assures us, no real conflict at all between the national and regional approach; the two are complementary aspects of the same thing. The general method itself is based upon an elaborate system of "indices" of judgment, by which the differentiating factors of a region may be isolated, the regional

culture defined, the regional boundaries ascertained. The application of the method thus results in a very detailed "map" or picture of the Southern region or regions; but the other regions, set off by a process of comparison, are also delimited, at least in outline. The general picture is of the national framework seen in regional terms. The South itself is no longer a South, but a Southeast and a Southwest; the other regional areas are the Northeast, the Middle States, the Northwest, and the Far West.

The "regions" here delimited are thus close approximations to the "sections" of Turner's description. They have a certain political as well as cultural entity; states are not eliminated in the interest of pure geographic determinism; in fact, the map of the regions, as drawn by Odum, is approximately the same, whether the regional boundaries are drawn strictly according to "socio-economic homegeneity," slightly overlapping state boundaries, or whether the division is allowed to fall along political lines.

What is there, then, to distinguish Odum from Turner? Odum concedes, with Turner, that, upon the evidence of his own indices, "there is not merely one vast nation but a half-dozen empires," the constituent parts of which, however transcended by purely physiographic factors, are state groupings. The new tendency towards economic nationalism has not lessened, but has rather strengthened, the importance of these groupings, for the doctrine of self-sufficiency requires, on the part of the nation, a studied observation of a principle of balance between regions, and a great care to prevent despoliation of one region by another. For the nation, regionalism means social and economic equilibrium; for any region concerned, it means a degree of autonomy, but not too much, guaranteed and maintained by national authority.

But how is regionalism to escape the peril of sectionalism, with its stress and conflict? How does Odum meet the charge

that the New Regionalism is simply the Old Sectionalism under a different name? Odum's argument is rhetorical and a little anxious. Regionalism, he holds, "envisages the nation first, making the national culture and welfare the final arbiter," while sectionalism "sees the section first and the nation afterwards." Regionalism implies "component and constituent parts of the larger national culture," while sectionalism "emphasizes political boundaries and state sovereignties" and "separateness." Regionalism is "line-breeding, in which the regional cultures constitute the base but not the whole of new evolving cultures," and sectionalism is "inbreeding." Regionalism, which calls for interregional and national coöperative processes, implies "more of the designed and planned society than sectionalism, which is the group correspondent to individualism"; and this means that regionalism substitutes a technique of research, conference and regionally adjusted legislation for the old technique of jockeying and compromise. And finally regionalism is a means of escaping the "coercive federalism," of an undemocratic dictatorial sort, which Odum sees as the inevitable consequence of a further development of sectionalism.

Perhaps this defense of regionalism—for it is a defense, rather than a statement of scientific actuality—grows out of Odum's realization of a possible weakness of his position. He has proved, up to the hilt, the South's old contentions as to its disadvantaged condition; but he can only hope that the nation will be persuaded to accept a regional philosophy; he concedes that acceptance of the new regionalism rests upon a change of mind, amounting almost to religious conversion. He does not observe, or does not care to grant, that, even under a regional procedure of a sort approved by social science, a dictatorial and highly centralized Federalism may result—the only bar to its development being merely the benevolence and highmindedness of the central government.

For the South in particular Odum is willing to charge the cost of repairing its existing regional deficiencies up to the Federal government; but, even granting that government's consent, the way to later exploitation is not closed; his regionalism is after all subservient—if it does not, indeed, look half-consciously toward Mr. Beard's view of the all-controlling Leviathan.[1]

And this, indeed, seems more or less the direction in which the social-scientific conception of regionalism inclines to move. With the economic geographers (like Russell Smith) they stress the interdependence of regions. Unless these are kept in fairly stable equilibrium, not only the nation may be disordered, but life itself, under modern conditions, is imperilled. Any exhibition of regional selfishness and particularism is thus considered dangerous; and the nation's political economy must be the equilibrizing force. Thus, in the end, the "concept of the region" in human-use terms leads to the concept of planning, on a nation-wide, intricate scale; and Turner's idea of a more or less informal check-and-balance system is discarded as inadequate for modern needs.

This is made clear by Vance, in his paper on "Implications of the Concepts 'Region' and 'Regional Planning,'" in which he explains the emendations that the planner would make in Turner's theory.

"The particular turn these movements [regionalism and regional planning] take in this country may well have come out of the maturing of America's own political and economic experience with the frontier and the sections. The transition from an unsettled to a settled country marks the gradual change from the frontier process to social control. The inter-

[1] Mr. Vance also leans at times in this direction. In *The Southern Review* (July, 1935), he wrote: "If the benefits of technology can not be made available to mankind under capitalism as we know it, they will be conserved under some more collective system."

mediate stage is sectionalism; the ultimate stage is regionalism and regional-national planning."

During the frontier period, Vance says, we have a process of differentiation under *laissez faire,* the frontier itself being a "region in flux." Then, as regional outlines appear, "the coalescence of the economic interests of the upper class" leads to rapid exploitation on a national scale. Under this exploitation the " 'sustentation region,' in Giddings' phrase, becomes the section, conscious of the clash of economic interests within the nation. The section is a region smarting under economic penalties established in the national policy." And so, "calculating the economic value of union," the injured section may even seek openly for separation.

But, as time goes on, "the flow and interchange of regional forces reaches an equilibrium." Then, "with the stabilization of the national economy, the acceptance of a certain minimum national policy, the lifting of penalties assigned against regions, or the virtual subsidy of those regions still penalized by the national policy, national regional planning to direct and redirect regional flow and interchange is in the offing."

Thus regionalism is neither a reversion to a primitive and simple economy, nor an attempt "to revive sectionalism under a less offensive name," but it is a necessary, organic feature of an advanced and well-ordered national civilization. It is the means by which the nation can calculate and adjust its domestic economy; and the implication is that it may have its bearings on foreign policy as well.

In Vance's account we are nowhere allowed to see the section disguising itself as nation, in the way that Turner describes. Vance's supposition is that sectional action is negative, protective, anti-national; it is not described as being, on occasion, positive, exploitative, and pseudo-national. This omission may be considered the social scientist's defense mechanism. His belief in the adequacy of national action

commits him to a pleasant and optimistic notion that regional-national planning is, in its very nature, immune to seizure by special regional interests.

These are theories. What of the application? If our society were a feudal hierarchy, with social scientists occupying the place of the clergy in medieval Christendom, there would be no gap between speculation and action. The same act by which society defined its qualities and ends would be, by immediate and natural extension, the act by which the ends were attained and the qualities conserved. Diagnosis and authority would go together. Since no such situation exists in modern society, the social scientists must fall back on the tedious processes of democratic government and achieve their purposes as best they may. Their leaning toward the totalitarian state is thus understandable, since it is the only kind of state which will have authority enough to make the perfect adjustments that they demand of a government. They are close to Beard's conception of the state as a functional instrument, even though they are far off from his description of the nation which it is to control.

As they are students and advisers rather than overt revolutionaries, they must work within the democratic forms. For this reason they emphasize the necessity for "planning." The notion of "planning" is, for them, a middle ground between the old *laissez faire* and complete dictatorial control. By committing an elected government to long-range plans, they hope to achieve the exact and orderly development which science, if it had authority, would simply put into effect by fiat. The notion may be a little romantic and hopeful, and nobody yet knows what will come of it, but we must examine it with respect, since it is in this sphere alone that any practical steps have so far been taken toward an application of the principles of the New Regionalism.

Regional planning of one sort or another is older than we might think. The Ordinance of 1787, which set up the Northwest Territory, might be considered a form of regional planning which has had far-reaching results. Likewise, the city of Washington from its very inception was a planned project. These antique examples need not detain us. In its modern stage, regional planning makes its official appearance in the efforts of cities and states, and even, at times, of the Federal government, to deal with problems that involve consideration of regional factors.

Where cities are concerned, and especially where the metropolitan complex overruns state boundaries, the metropolitan regional planning agency has come into action. The problem here is partly one of jurisdiction; the metropolis overlaps state boundaries, and its regional problem must be settled by agreement between states, perhaps by Interstate Compact. There is also, however, the conception of the metropolis itself as a region, which is to be planned, like Frank Lloyd Wright's dream-city of Broadacres, in harmony with its site and, presumably, its general locale. This conception, if pursued to its limit, implies large regions of which the metropolitan regions are nuclei. There is at least one school of planners who insist that this is the only logical and inevitable basis of regional planning. They do not realize that a city may be, not a true regional capital, but an outpost of empire.

Where the internal economy of a state is alone concerned, we have plans for zoning, which imply a program of conservation and development within state boundaries. Under the Roosevelt administration, state planning commissions have been set up everywhere, and the idea of state planning, which will take subregions into account, has received enormous impetus, although in most states the planning commissions have little or no legal status. They are likely to be composed of social scientists, who are in the position of being able to pre-

sent their researches directly to authority rather than by the old informal and haphazard method.

More important than either of these, from the national point of view, are various movements that involve action, either legal or extra-legal, by groups of states. The necessity for such action occurs when the interests or problems of the states concerned do not follow the lines of state boundaries and yet do not fall within the field of action constitutionally prescribed for the Federal government. For example, the "milkshed" which furnishes metropolitan New York covers several eastern states; any action, therefore, on the part of one state to regulate the milk supply necessarily involves the other states. This is a broad example, which clearly concerns a fairly definite region. The Lake Champlain bridge between New York and Vermont, the formation of the Port of New York Authority to control harbor facilities in which New York State and New Jersey both are concerned, the problem of developing the Colorado River Basin are other notable and obvious examples. In all of these situations, the only legal recourse of the states concerned has been the Interstate Compact, which is probably the most unwieldy and least satisfactory method of establishing regional controls by negotiation and agreement between states.

Of a more general, less formally legal character is the movement of states represented in the New England Council and in the increasing tendency of state officials to form interstate associations for discussion and for uniform action. The New England Council, as described by Governor John G. Winant of New Hampshire, began as an economic body, but quickly extended its function to deal with governmental matters. In this organization the governors of six New England states came together for consultation at regular intervals; commissioners of health met to deal with health problems, and commissioners of agriculture to formulate a legislative

program which would result in an increased consumption of New England products. Such a procedure is legal and authoritative only to the extent that it provides, through the state legislatures, for consultations leading to uniform action, and sets up, or contemplates setting up, regional secretariats which will devote their energies to research and advice leading to regional planning. Behind the New England effort there is probably a strong revival of regional, or sectional feeling; but there is every reason to think that the method will be widely used as the necessity for such consultation forces itself upon the states of any given region. Already there have come into being two regional planning commissions, for New England and for the Pacific Northwest. The Southeastern Regional Planning Commission, advocated by Odum and others, will, if established, make a third.

Last, there are the definite steps taken toward regional planning by the Federal government itself. The most notable Federal project of this sort is, of course, the great Tennessee Valley Authority, with its vast plan that brings navigation, flood control, power development, and conservation of forests and soil into a single design affecting several states. This project implies others, of a like sort; but it is by no means the only instance in which the Federal government shows itself conscious of the validity and necessity of a regional approach. In exercising its administrative functions it has not been able in recent times to work within state boundaries. The treasury department, the army, the postoffice, the departments of agriculture and the interior, the geological survey have developed regional set-ups as the scale of their operations has grown. These may be viewed as efforts toward efficiency of operation; they have been as necessary to non-regionally-minded administrations as they have been to the Roosevelt administration. But the Roosevelt administration, which has drawn heavily upon scientific advice, is the first to take a con-

sciously regional approach. Indeed it has popularized the term *regional* to such an extent that it appears almost as often on the lips of the populace as in the blue prints of the experts.

The full significance of this preoccupation with regional organization and plans is yet to be seen. We do not know, for a certainty, whether the regional approach simply means a sharpening of efficiency, which may be used for purposes of drastic "regimentation," or whether the Roosevelt administration is moving toward an amendment of the national government which will encourage regional coöperation and remove some of the old abuses of national power.

The Roosevelt administration, however, has made a commitment of a sort, by openly and officially undertaking a study of the regional problem. The record of its study is contained in a notable report, issued under the auspices of the National Resources Committee (a presidential, not a congressional committee), with the title, *Regional Factors in National Planning*. We should note that two prominent social scientists, Charles E. Merriam and Wesley C. Mitchell, are members of the resources committee itself, and that the technical committee on regional planning, which must have done most of the work, is headed by John M. Gaus of Wisconsin, a prominent political scientist. From the character of the document itself, a layman must conclude that Professor Gaus is well-nigh the pioneer in political science that Turner was in history.

It is one of the most amazing reports ever issued by any bureau or committee of the United States government. Rarely, if ever, in a public document, have any appointees or employees of the United States government devoted themselves to a systematic consideration of the taboo question of sectional stress and conflict. Such questions have been kept behind the scenes; but here they are in the forefront of analysis. This committee, speaking of the role of regionalism,

asks, "Will they (the regions) eventually absorb both from the Federal government and the states political functions that will lead to, as one writer terms it, a 'United Regions of America'? Should such regions seek specialization based upon their peculiarities of resources and form an organic whole as a nation, or should they seek autonomous self-containment?" In those questions, we are near Calhoun's old unanswered question as to how the national government will provide for a contingency which finds one section at the mercy of other sections. The committee's study, in essence, deals with that very question, but of course in the careful language of social science, letting sleeping dogs lie and utilizing, as Messrs. Odum and Vance would say, the "regional-national approach."

Here the Federal government itself takes notice both of Turner's theory of American history and of the conclusions of geographer and social scientist. The old problem is restated: that political boundaries and powers do not coincide with economic and social problems. The inadequacy of national government and the weakness of state government are considered and examined. The theory of regionalism itself is stated and pondered. The pressure of contemporary forces leading to regional development is recognized. It is as if the Federal government had given its official sanction to the New Regionalism, and allied itself with that doctrine as a working philosophy in its approach to domestic affairs.

Of course it is a philosophy of approach only, which can be expected to be active only within the sphere where the Federal government is already legitimately operating; it does not propose a legislative program. Especially it does not propose any revision of existing constitutional arrangements, or any change in political organization. Regionalism, the committee is careful to say, "is not a Balkanization of the United States, but a better organization of our American national purposes—a more effective promotion of the public welfare."

It specifically disapproves any attempt to set up regions "as new political units . . . as a basis of congressional representation and as independent authorities."

In actual recommendations, the committee limits its proposals to two kinds of regional action: first the encouragement by the national government, in many cases supported by financial aid, of state, interstate, and metropolitan planning of a regional character; and second, types of regional planning and of national-regional administration which can be undertaken in the interest of the nation by the Federal government itself. The document is thus symbolic and prophetic, rather than directive. It indicates the course which may be taken by a national administration which is committed to planning under expert guidance and which is also sympathetic to the regional approach. In this connection, we should note that the committee, in announcing a preference for variable, rather than fixed regional boundaries, seems to adhere, as do Vance and Odum, to a notion of regionalism as a generous and efficient form of social control rather than as a pushing tendency which will eventuate in political expression.

Another advantage of having no fixed regional boundaries is the welding effect of interlocking regions upon the national structure. The rapid and drastic changes occurring in our national life necessarily subject the Nation to heavy internal strains. Some areas are blighted by the shrinking of their customary source of income. Some areas are subjected to heavy debts, while others depend for their prosperity on their power to collect debts. The conflicting sectional interests interact through the national elections and through the Federal Congress, without serious disorder. If regions with serious problems were to be given geographical boundaries, the tendency to defend their regional interest at the boundary, so characteristic of Europe, might be encouraged in America. On the other hand, a series of interrelated regions, closely cooperating with the Federal establishment, would tend to cement the union and to promote the national solution of intersectional maladjustments.

In the phrase, "the national solution of intersectional maladjustments," we have perhaps the most advanced official indication of how social science proposes to make the new regionalism effective. We are close here to the idea of equilibrium, maintained by a powerful central government, conscious at last that the national welfare is not to be defined apart from regional considerations. We have even a hint that the national government which ignores regional considerations may not endure as a national government. But again, social science offers no guarantee that the government will be region-conscious—no guarantee, surely, as lasting and effective, as the constitutional guarantees of the bill of rights or of the maintenance of a republican form of government in the several states.

And so it is necessary to view the report of the committee, along with the works of Vance, Odum, and Webb, as indicative of a trend rather than as a promise of actual performance. The document, *Regional Factors in National Planning,* is another bit of evidence—perhaps the most formidable evidence available—that the diversity of the United States, by regions, has reached the point where it compels official attention, and where we may hope, though without complete assurance, that study will lead to action.

Beyond that, the most notable value of the government study is its perfectly clear and comprehensive statement of how the regional movement looks from a governmental and national point of view. Regionalism itself is acknowledged as a reality to be dealt with; and, while all types of region, from the pure geographic to the composite or multifactor region, are considered and delineated, with reference to their usefulness in national planning, there is a significant acknowledgment of the close approach of regions to sections in Turner's sense. "One may state with some certainty that regions are genuine entities, each of which expresses both

natural and cultural differentiation from its neighbors. As such, they are definite and recognizable subnational units within the national whole. . . . Nor is such regional differentiation to be deplored. Rather, it may turn out to be the true expression of American life and culture."

We should furthermore note that the governmental specialists go on record as approving, for national planning, the type of region which itself possesses not only homogeneity, combination of resources, but a "total areal pattern of culture and works," a regional identity, and regional consciousness, and a fairly large size. The term region seems to apply to the largest area within which there is marked unity in physical and cultural elements. This means, for the larger purposes of the nation, that administrative convenience, economic specialization, metropolitan regions, and even valley regions like the TVA must take a place subordinate to the multifactor or composite region. A division of the map on this principle gives twelve regions, which in their names again show us how quickly, in the final showdown, science takes precedence over politics, history, and tradition.

These regions are: the *Northeastern Forest Region,* which takes in most of upper New England and upper New York; the *Eastern Region,* covering the seaboard states of the middle Atlantic group and extending west through Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, and even dropping south into Maryland and Northern Virginia; the *Ozark-Appalachian Region,* which takes in Tennessee and Kentucky with the southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, together with parts of Missouri and Arkansas; the *Southern Region,* which takes in most of the "Deep South," with Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas; the *Gulf Coast Region* and the *Great Lakes Region*—both narrow strips crossing several states; the *Midwestern Region*—roughly the "corn-belt" states; the *Great Plains Region*—about the territory described by Webb in his book on the

Great Plains; the *Intermountain Region,* which takes in most of the Rockies south of the Columbia River line and extends southward to take in Arizona, New Mexico, and part of Texas; the *Columbia Basin Region,* which covers portions of Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon; the *Pacific Northwest Region;* the *California Valley Region.*

We cannot yet be certain whether a Federal "intervention" along such regional lines will actually incorporate regional considerations as a part of the democratic process, or will merely increase the functioning power and efficiency of a Leviathan state. It is nevertheless true that the New Regionalists of social science, moving perhaps in line with forces and feelings that they themselves cannot chart, are beginning to perform some of the functions that a nation expects of its statesmen. After nearly three-quarters of a century of government ruled by single considerations, they are showing, with incontrovertible cogency, that national government in the United States involves multiple considerations, for which the regional approach, in one form or another, is indispensable. They give us a method of looking behind political shibboleths and of estimating the effect of past and future policies upon the diverse cultures of which the American nation is composed. Without using political language they are showing us that social legislation on a national scale implies a better understanding of the actual structure of our society than humanitarian reformers of other days have troubled to obtain.

IV. Regionalism in the Arts

To trace the course of regionalism in American arts it is important to disengage the active phenomena from the vocabulary which has been used to describe them. Artistic regionalism, so-called, is like the regionalism of the social scientists in so far as it is a new attempt to meet an old problem. But often the advocates of regionalism and their opponents have become so excited over words that they have forgotten what the real argument is about. To one wing of American criticism regionalists seem to subscribe to some narrow and confining principle of art. Regional, as they use the term, has somewhat the vituperative quality that *sectional* has in politics, when it is used as an epithet. It is the word used to signify an opponent's limitations. By way of rebuttal, the regionalists are quick to point out the evil and bigoted assumptions which may be wrapped up in so fine a word as *cosmopolitan;* but they, in turn, are too ready to elevate the word *regional,* a term poorly descriptive at best, into a slogan and a panacea.

We shall escape such confusions if we survey the condition of the arts in America during the last twenty-five years. From 1912, the year when *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* was founded in Chicago, up to some time, not easily fixed, in the nineteen-twenties, the trend of American art, especially in poetry and fiction, was strongly urban and cosmopolitan. If we may judge by the vigor of the arts in those days, the creative spirit was widely present in America. But the arts took

their temper and point of view from the cities, which were dominating American life as thoroughly as the country had done a century before. And these arts took their form and their animating aesthetic principles from abroad, chiefly from England and France, where the interplay of spiritual disillusionment and scientific progress had long since forced European art toward the decadence foreshadowed in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the typical literary figure of the day, in America, was a composite of Ezra Pound and Sinclair Lewis. He had refinement without strength, or strength without refinement. At his rare best he might be an artist of distinction who, like Donne or Keats, worked with a certain desperate exaltation. More often he was a person of some talent who had achieved disillusionment and sophistication a little too cheaply, to whom cynicism and defeatism, as Herbert Agar has noted, represented not the "tired disdain" of a played-out civilization, but rousing new doctrines, "boyish and positive as battle-cries." Because it had become fashionable to do so, and often profitable, he despised American ways and cultivated the manners of the Parisian café. In caricature, this now familiar figure appears as Ernest Boyd's "Aesthete: Model 1924." He is some college graduate suckled on the mild milk of Wilsonian idealism and Victorian poetry and then weaned by a sharp spell of war experience, followed by a glamorous lingering on the left bank of the Seine. In Paris, wrote Boyd, this person "breathed the same air as the Dadaists, met Picasso and Philippe Soupault, and allowed Ezra Pound to convince him that the French nation was aware of the existence of Jean Cocteau, Paul Morand, Jean Giraudoux, and Louis Aragon."

Whatever was foreign or had a foreign air had prestige. Whatever was American acquired merit only as it imitated the foreign or satirized the domestic. Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase" had merit; so did Joyce's *Ulysses*, and *The*

Little Review, which published parts of it; so did the Imagist anthologies, *The Dial, The American Mercury,* the books of Floyd Dell, Sinclair Lewis, James Branch Cabell, Theodore Dreiser, the music of Stravinski, the psychology of Freud, the photography of Stieglitz, the world history of H. G. Wells. To this procession Whitman, Stephen Crane, and Melville were admitted, along with skyscraper architecture, jazz, the new automobile, and the New Negro. But the Puritan had no merit, nor had the Southerner unless he renounced Fundamentalism and white supremacy, nor the Westerner unless he disowned Gopher Prairie. The country belonged to the immigrant masses whose claims had been set forth by Waldo Frank in *Our America;* or to any artist who could achieve a parallel expatriation by carefully blotting out all traces of his origin and tradition. Certain poets of a different order got a blundering acceptance, but only because metropolitan critics were able to overemphasize qualities of their work which seemed to dissociate them from their background and could read into their art the images which existed in the metropolitan mind. Frost, for example, was praised for the supposedly bleak portrait of the New England he was thought to be deploring in *North of Boston;* Robinson for his skepticism; Lindsay for his "higher vaudeville"; Masters for his "realism."

The progress of the arts in the nineteen-twenties thus is an adventure paralleling, and maybe in part reflecting, the adventure in internationalism represented by American participation in the World War and in European post-war economics. A new articulateness, supported by a sudden burst of vitality, appeared in the arts at the time when America was in closer economic and cultural relations with Europe than it had been since the founding of the Republic. Europe, ignoring the fact that America's great cities and their civilization were largely colonial extensions of its own system of finance and industry, might complain that it was being Americanized by

jazz, movies, advertising, mass-production. But European penetration in America was far more significant. Toward Paris and London urban America was as obsequiously colonial as had been the New York of Irving or the Virginia of William Byrd. The main channel of communication was, first, the "expatriate" who found it cheaper, in terms of a depreciated French currency, to live in Paris than in New York or Indianapolis. Whether his productions appeared in some "little magazine," like *Broom* or *Gargoyle*, which found its way from a printing shop in Rome or Paris into the hands of the Gopher Prairie aesthete, or whether he invaded the better-paying columns of a national magazine or the booklists of an indulgent New York publisher, the result was the same. To America he communicated the art-modes of a post-war Europe which had nothing to offer as positive or as quickening as the ideas and modes that had followed in the wake of the French Revolution, more than a century earlier. The excellencies and defects of this art were the result of the long series of harassments and adjustments which the arts had gone through in Europe, where the steady advance of science and industrialism had disordered if not destroyed the historic European culture from which, at a much earlier stage, America had stemmed. They were not the excellencies and defects that one would expect in an American environment, where the disordering element was not so deeply entrenched.

Next in importance were the agents of diffusion which could now employ the technique of mass-distribution, developed for the products of giant industry, to disseminate the higher and lower manifestations of modernity as rapidly as they came from the cosmopolitan, deracinated artist. Although in its most advanced forms the modern temper might not appear to be a readily marketable product, it had, like automobile and radio, the appeal of novelty. In cheapened commercial forms, if not in their highest forms, the new arts could use the

mechanics employed for the marketing of chewing gum and patented cereals. In the concluding chapter of *The Rise of American Civilization,* the process is thus described:

> Within a week of their announcement the modes of New York, Boston, and Chicago became the modes of Winesburg, Gopher Prairie, and Centerville, and swept on without delay into remote mountain fastnesses. Thus the technology of interchangeable parts was reflected in the clothing, sports, amusements, literature, architecture, manners, and speech of the multitude. The curious stamp of uniformity which had arrested the attention of James Bryce at the dawn of the machine age sank deeper and deeper into every phase of national life—material and spiritual.... To artists of a classical bent and to spectators of a soulful temper the pageant in its deadly uniformity was no doubt rather agonizing. But neither could explain how an age of machinery might by any magic retain the flexibility inherent in an age of handicrafts.

This statement, though unnecessarily patronizing toward certain artists and spectators, indicates correctly the character of urban influence. At the same time it fails to note that the effective centre from which cosmopolitan influence radiated was principally one city. New York was strategically located as a port of entry for the Europeanisms with which it felt a closer communion than with the Americanisms of the hinterland. The mesh of communications radiating from New York and established by the financial enterprise which had piled up its booty and fixed its headquarters on Manhattan Island now served to carry the productions of an art that was criticized, defended, promulgated, and publicized as no previous movement of the arts in America had ever been. In this grand process, Chicago or Atlanta merely retailed what New York wholesaled. The great cities of the hinterland, for all their braggadocio and expansiveness, were slavishly imitative. Their newly acquired big-city consciousness worked with the highly developed urban and industrial environment

to make them receptive and eager transmitters; and so it happened that Chicago, despite its brawling, husky, big-shoulder qualities, could display, in Ben Hecht, a decadent more irremediably and unreasonably decayed than Huysmans or Proust.

In New York were publishing houses, critical organs, newspapers, general magazines, art galleries, and theatres established in such concentration and power as to be, for the moment, a controlling influence in American art. In New York was Greenwich Village, where the legend of the Latin Quarter could be simulated—and commercially exploited. To New York came the young aspirant for artistic honors, expatriating himself cheerfully from his native province, bringing with him a sort of gulping abandon and asking only to be filled up. Through New York came various birds of passage: the expatriates, bound for European destinations; and, from abroad, the literary lecturers and notabilities, each to be interviewed, photographed, and cocktailed before starting on a profitable swing around the circle of women's clubs.

The ease with which the new arts penetrated America is good evidence of the degree to which the people of the cities had almost everywhere become detached from the ways of town and country. Yet perhaps certain qualifications need to be made. Not all of urban America was as completely detached as New York. Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt and Dodsworth, who may be thought of as having removed from Gopher Prairie to Zenith, retained some shreds of the old American suspicion as to the intrinsic superiority of European importations. Since these gentlemen left the cultivation of the arts to their wives, probably we should attribute a large part of the defection of the cities to the influence of Mesdames Babbitt and Dodsworth and their friends. The ladies, newly released from inhibitions by Freud and emancipated from household slavery by the combined exertions of inventive and

financial genius, had time to cultivate the arts which seemed consonant with their dignity as new women. They and their unmarried sisters were ready to hearken to what New York would say about the Paris fashions, in books as in hats; and so as audience they determined the character of best-selling novels as they determined the interior decorations and driving convenience of automobiles.

But whatever the reasons for subservience, most American cities, in their period of sudden expansion, would fit the general description given by Joseph E. Baker for New York and Chicago. For all their seeming newness they were actually "late colonial offshoots of a European civilization already in decline when they were built." They lacked "the cultural past native to American cities." They did not have "the vital organic relation to our American culture, which is growing up now where cultures have always grown: in the smaller cities and the countryside." To comprehend the full sweep of the process, we must grasp the meaning of what happens when, in the greater cities of the hinterland, swayed by Hollywood movies and newspapers cut to a metropolitan pattern, the Seven Lively Arts described by Gilbert Seldes replace the folk arts of the regions to which the cities belong. When Abe Martin, symbolically speaking, gives way to Krazy Kat, and Poor Richard and Sut Lovengood yield to Walter Winchell, then Zenith has become an outpost of Paris and New York. At the same time we must concede that New York, which was after all mainly a distributing agent interested in profits, vended also the literature of protest that had arisen within the domain of cosmopolitanism: for example, the novels of D. H. Lawrence, who mocked at the sterile pretensions of urban civilization, or the peasant novels of Hamsun, or the poems of T. S. Eliot, or the grim predictions of Oswald Spengler, or the growing literature of economic and social protest. Along with these, too, went American works, like the stories of Sherwood An-

derson and the poems of Frost, Lindsay, Ransom, whose import was not yet understood.

The general trend, however, was at first overwhelmingly in the direction indicated by the Beards. There was no fear of standardization itself, but only a flare of urban indignation if the standardizing did not seem to go rapidly enough in Dayton, Tennessee, or in Texas or Illinois. Sophistication had the call over wisdom; experiment over tradition; technique over style; and emancipation over morals—until, in the typical novel or play of the nineteen-twenties, a seduction became, not an outrage perpetrated by a villain, but a new and exciting form of salvation.

Yet the causes of the regional rebellion against this trend in the arts lay deeper than any discontent with the self-conscious pursuit of impropriety, pornography, and novelty which had become a feature of cosmopolitan art. The "technology of interchangeable parts" in certain ways did exactly what was claimed for it. Cities grew into extraordinary new shapes and sizes. Technological achievement rushed forward as aviation, radio, sound-movies, labor-saving machinery, and the discoveries of chemist and biologist rapidly exploited and consolidated the tentative advances of nineteenth-century science. Material comforts of the manufactured kind were more widely distributed in the United States than in any nation known to history before. The "high standard of living" necessary to an expanding industrial system seemed in the way of becoming a reality as the great empire of business, working outward from its northeastern headquarters, annexed to its domain and forced into urban patterns one territory after another of the West and South which had been penetrated but not conquered by the cruder railroading and finance for which the war of the sixties had opened the way.

But aside from the political inequalities and economic weaknesses that were soon to bring Hoover prosperity into

a decline, the system had a defect that endangered its cultural dominion and vitiated many of its material gains. It abstracted the economic function from its old place in the complex of human activities and made it the chief, and almost the only important, member of the hierarchy of social functions. Such abstraction and over-emphasis seem to be necessary features of an industrial system, which must depend upon a scheme of correlations and balances vast in extension but delicate and complicated in their inner workings. Without pure devotion to economic purpose at every point in the gigantic scheme of manufacture and distribution, the whole thing may break down, like an automobile stalled on the road by the failure of some minute part. In the nineteen-twenties, therefore, everybody in America was tending to become producer, entrepreneur, or consumer. Nothing, not even education and religion, could be "put over" unless it was "sold." All cultural institutions had to be geared to the process of "selling" industrialism. Furthermore, in the process of elevating economic function to the highest place, this function itself became more abstract and specialized as the general system underwent new refinements and complexities. The country seemed about to turn into an enormous assembly line to which the American individual contributed, without vision of the whole, only a trifling bit of piece work. Persons were becoming negligible. Function was all.

The cultural weaknesses of this system become apparent when we examine the many losses that accompany its apparent gains. For example, the system can, and seemingly must, put universal compulsory education into effect. The semblance of universal education has been almost achieved in America, in the sense that school-buildings have been erected everywhere and teachers and pupils put to work in them. However, the education to be diffused must, as a condition of general diffusion, be cut to fit the average if not the lowest rank of pupils.

It can be widely communicated only by being greatly diluted. And so an urban culture which might be successfully carried on at an ideal level by persons of high intelligence and wisdom must be vulgarized when it is made the general condition of life, and when so vulgarized loses much of its value. The high disinterestedness of the ideal urban person is likely to become, in the masses, mere lethargy, and the social will is lost. By the middle of the nineteen-twenties, education was in confusion. The sponsors of universal education could not agree on what the staple of such an education ought to be, either in school or in college. In default of general ideas and purposes they were allowing education to become a mere "conditioning" process: they were training producers to produce, consumers to consume, and technicians to technologize.

Education is only one example of how the means used by industrialism to gain its ends results in perverting the ends. The high standard of living uplifted the masses at great cost to their humanity and selfrespect. The mountain boy could get a college education, but the system that built him a school also took out of his mouth the traditional ballad that was his ancient heritage, and instead of a ballad gave him a "mammy song" devised in Tin Pan Alley by the urbanized descendant of a Russian Jew. Meanwhile, the system, working through another specialized department, recorded the ballad and stowed it away on the shelf of a library to be studied and annotated, as the artifact of a lost culture, by men who would never sing it. To the country boy, newly become a millhand, the system gave more money than he had ever seen; but organized capital and labor told him how to spend it. The new woman, advancing into pursuits denied her grandmother, gained a profession or a job; but she lost her right to become a mother. The farmer got an automobile; but he lost his home.

Such tendencies made life in America exciting to the point

of hysteria, or, by reaction, tedious and bleak, and rarely satisfying. The critical question was whether the standardization of *mores* so necessary to a complete triumph of industrialism could be accomplished by the sheer driving power of economic motive alone. Long before the end of the nineteen-twenties it was apparent that the economic motive itself behaved unequally and unpredictably; and that where it did not inflict social injustice it often defeated its own purposes, either through paralysis of the social will or through active resentment of sections or classes that suffered under the abuses of the system. The process of standardization had not persuaded the inmost conviction or touched deeply the personal lives of millions of diverse Americans. In business, standardization might not be escaped. Elsewhere it might be escaped or rejected, on grounds of its tediousness if for no other reason; or, where the demands of the system became oppressive, its sway might be challenged. This was especially true of those sections where standardization implied an economic despoliation which could be recognized as accruing to the material benefit of the Northeast.

It is not necessary to use the special terminology of regionalism to describe the character of the changes that have occurred since the nineteen-twenties. All that we have to do is to draw the circumstantial picture, and set it, with its highlights properly noted, beside the picture of the arts in the earlier period.

By the time of the Great Depression, when the vast economic system found itself almost at a standstill, it was easy to see that the cosmopolitan movement of the two previous decades had won at best an incomplete and uncertain victory. The expatriates who had not already been lured back to America by plain homesickness had been driven back by the devaluation of the dollar. The expatriate, in fact, had begun

to vanish as a literary type and had lost his dominion over the arts. *The Dial* and *The Little Review* had stopped publication, taking with them into silence most of their imitators. The great general magazines published in New York found the going hard. As their circulation dropped and their prestige decreased, they either committed *felo de se*, like *The Century Magazine*, or became, like *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*, somewhat less heavy and intellectual, somewhat more popular and journalistic. H. L. Mencken left his post on *The American Mercury;* it soon dwindled to tabloid size. Critics who had helped lead the shock-troops of the Younger Generation in its assaults on Victorianism had either passed from sight, or had slipped into comfortable academic positions and formed commercial alliances with book clubs. *The New Republic* and *The Nation*, which had published much of the best criticism of the nineteen-twenties, had sacrificed their general literary function to serve the collectivist programs to which they were now openly committed. Their place as active literary periodicals was taken by ambitious and able magazines in the South and West, far from metropolitan surroundings: *The Virginia Quarterly Review, The Southern Review, The Frontier and Midland, American Prefaces, The Southwest Review, The Symposium*, and lesser regional magazines. Of the special art magazines of the nineteen-twenties only *Poetry* held on, surviving its original editor to go into its second quarter-century.

One of the most notable changes took place within the domain itself of metropolitan New York. Seward Collins, after waging a vigorous campaign in *The Bookman* for the Humanist program, converted the old literary periodical into a new magazine, *The American Review*, which was founded, he announced, to serve as an organ of expression for several groups widely separated geographically but more or less united in being spokesmen for tradition rather than for root-

less dissociation. In the first number of *The American Review*, issued in April, 1933, he wrote:

The American Review is founded to give greater currency to the ideas of a number of groups and individuals who are radically critical of conditions prevalent in the modern world, but launch their criticism from a 'traditionalist' basis.... The magazine is a response to the widespread and growing feeling that the forces and principles which have produced the modern chaos are incapable of yielding any solution; that the only hope is a return to fundamentals and tested principles which have been largely pushed aside. Fortunately, there is no lack of able men to represent this traditionalist point of view, although they have been forced to work in isolation from each other and have achieved nothing like the influence to which their stature entitles them. It should be obvious that a periodical aiming to bring these groups and individuals together is particularly needed in this country, where tradition took little root before it was overridden by the disruptive forces now threatening Western civilization.

The new magazine, he announced, had no policy, strictly speaking, beyond providing an outlet for the views of traditionalist writers. These were specifically named, as belonging to four groups: the English "Distributists"—Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, and others; the Southern Agrarians; the American "Humanists"—Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and their followers; and the "Neo-Scholastics"—"men who are carrying on the Aristotelico-thomistic tradition in philosophy and applying it to modern problems." In adopting this policy *The American Review* became the first big-city magazine in American history to throw its influence to the side of the pluralistic forces of the various regions rather than to the monistic and centralizing forces of the metropolis. Aside from the merit of its contributions, which maintained a level of seriousness and dignity not to be found in its New York contemporaries, *The American Review* was important, out of all proportion to its circulation and direct influence, as a sign of

the times. It indicated clearly not only the rising insistence of the regions of the hinterland upon their point of view, but a thoughtful insurgence on the part of the Old Northeast against the growing clamor of the parties represented in such Marxian periodicals as *The New Masses*.

As for literature in general, it had to be said that no single literary type or artistic point of view any longer completely dominated the American scene. The Marxians of the East, who had drawn to their colors many of the former expatriates, remained the only really vocal representatives of the cosmopolitan spirit in art. Communism gave them a social cause, which they argued ceaselessly, but, for all their protestations about the mission of the artist to exalt the proletariat and the earnest stir of such conferences as the American Congress of Writers, nothing emerged that was very convincing or striking. They were the most uninteresting revolutionaries that America had ever known. Most of what was really vigorous in American literature was coming from the South, the West, and from non-metropolitan regions of the East. "Regional" fiction, as reviewers now learned to call it, began to replace the realistic and satirical fiction of the nineteen-twenties. Yet no common tendency united these various productions except, in a general way, as they rejected cosmopolitanism and took delight in what Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser had deplored. There was a wide and miscellaneous exploration of whatever was native American, and literary art dwelt increasingly on the historical, the primitive, the legendary. The typical best-sellers of the nineteen-thirties were romantic, sweeping novels like Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, Davis's *Honey in the Horn*, Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, Kenneth Roberts' *Northwest Passage*, and Walter Edmonds' *Drums along the Mohawk*. In criticism, the solid and ambitious essays of Eliot, Tate, and Blackmur replaced the journalistic improvisations of the twenties. Debunking biography gave way to a large-

scale, affirmative study of American heroes, statesmen, and literary figures. Carl Sandburg's *Lincoln: the Prairie Years* and Douglas S. Freeman's *R. E. Lee* roused again old sectional memories. Van Wyck Brooks' indictment of the frontier, in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain,* was answered and exploded in Bernard De Voto's *Mark Twain's America,* a book which bristled with documentation and belligerency; it was a Western dismissal, uproarious and salty, of the thin-blooded folly of the urban East. The same field was explored more quietly by Constance Rourke in her studies of American humor and of the lives of David Crockett and Audubon. Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought,* which had appeared in the closing years of the twenties, put the historians of American literature to rewriting their textbooks and sent candidates for Ph.D. degrees scurrying enthusiastically to many new and hitherto untouched fields of investigation. Collection after collection of American ballads, songs, and folk-tales set at rest forever the libel of the twenties, which had argued that America lacked a folk-art of any sort—except a certain approved variety of Negro blues and spirituals.

In other arts the changes, though less marked, were in the same direction. American music, though still largely under foreign and metropolitan sway, showed signs of rebelling against the whims of European conductors and the tastes of foreign juntas. American composers who were developing in their own vein or exploring the possibilities of American folk music began to find a place on programs. Choral organizations waxed in numbers and influence and began to take up American songs; the habit of singing was beginning to make a little headway against the "cult of listening silence" that had grown up around concert platform and radio. In the graphic arts, though modernism still ruled, the art of such imported propagandists as Orozco and Rivera was balanced by the work of

Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton. The works of early American painters and craftsmen were revived, along with the prints of Currier and Ives, early American glass, antique furniture, handmade coverlets, and wrought-iron. Even women's fashions reflected the new vogue as skirts lengthened and hats and bodices recalled the sixties, the eighties, the nineties. Architecture, as the Chicago of Century of Progress showed, still leaned in its urban modes to the functional designs of the machine age, but any further development of skyscrapers seemed a doubtful possibility in view of the changes in city life wrought by the automobile. Urban architecture seemed destined to move in the direction of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Broadacres." There was a school of architects, of growing importance, who contended against abstraction and restudied the problem of adapting business and residence architecture to environment as well as to function. When the Roosevelt housing program got under way, such architects found an opportunity to do effective work. They were at least as much interested in the town and country problem, where architecture must fit a landscape and a locale, as in the no-region of slum-clearance projects.

Such changes, looked at in retrospect, seem to reveal nowhere any sudden and violent reaction. We see, rather, a nation feeling its way slowly and tentatively toward restoring the balance between a too imperious cosmopolitanism and the scattered American traditions which had been overlaid but not destroyed by the diffusion of urban modes. To be understood, regionalism in the arts must be examined against this background, which of course was beginning to show even in the twenties. Regionalism as an "ism" is only one phase of a general movement of revulsion and affirmation: the self-conscious phase, in which the artist discovers his own discontent and rebels against false guidance. As a rebel he may be

sometimes as shallow as was George Moore, when he dabbled in the Irish Renaissance: that is, he may be a born eclectic grasping after novelty, whose hail may quickly turn to farewell. But he may also be an artist with an urban background, honestly seeking regeneration. He may be a Southerner, a New Englander, a Westerner who has found terms in which he believes his heritage can be defended and expressed. Or he may be one of those great exiles who, like Dante in the Middle Ages and Milton in the seventeenth century, are driven by defeat into retrospect and new aspiration. In all of these phases, selfconscious regionalism may play a greater or a lesser role; but beyond all of them lies the redefinition of national consciousness in sectional or regional terms. The self-conscious revolt of the artist may be considered as symptomatic of something more general, that is everywhere in American society.

In its selfconscious phase, regionalism may be described as a retreat from the artistic leviathanism of the machine age, symbolized by the dominance of New York during the nineteen-twenties. Superficially this regionalism may be a catchword or a slogan, a passing innovation thrown up in the familiar cycle of convention and revolt in the arts, and appropriated by artists too dispirited to endure the strain of modern life. Such regionalists, in the language of metropolitan critics, may strive to "turn the clock back," or indulge in one of the numerous varieties of romantic escape. Their art may be only another manifestation of the primitivism which has been common in modern literature ever since Rousseau exalted the Noble Savage. Such primitivism, even in the twenties, set poets and musicians to studying Amerindian rhythms and novelists to exploiting the rich naïveté of the Negro or the symbolism of *The Golden Bough*. But this kind of regionalism is affected chiefly by tired metropolitans or by persons employed in amusing tired metropolitans. We see its results in

the literary stereotypes of the poor white, the Negro, the mountaineer, that competed with the Main Street version of American life almost as soon as Sinclair Lewis invented it. It is an easy corollary of the realistic-satirical approach. The very people who yesterday thought of country people as "hicks" tomorrow call them "peasants." At a lower level, the same kind of "regional" art secures a large and perennially devoted audience for "western" movies and stories.

This regionalism is generally nothing more than a simplified and condescending urban idea of regional culture. It may be distinguished by the explicitness with which it caters to a metropolitan audience. Its practitioners may establish art colonies in New Mexico or in the highland regions of the South. Its literary ladies, who once wore berets and smocks and drank gin while they read objectivist verse by candlelight, may don khaki and puttees and go into the hills to dabble in "folk-culture" or into the desert to collect pottery and watch snake-dances. At a slightly more serious level the fad may produce nostalgics who retire into a "tradition" very much as Edmund Wilson would like to think of Yeats as retiring into an Axel's Castle. Against such exhibitions of regionalism the earnest complaints of critics like Paul R. Beath must be allowed to have force. It is true, as he says, that such regionalists often inflate "mediocrity, especially local mediocrity" into undeserved prestige and, by implication, "deny the great tradition" of letters.

In bringing his indictment, however, Mr. Beath makes a grave error in failing to distinguish between such regionalists and others whose approach is even more critical than his own. He speaks slightingly, for instance, of the Southern Agrarians, claiming that their regionalism is "based upon an inferiority complex" and is animated chiefly by jealousy of the commanding position enjoyed by New York. But the "regionalism" of the Southern Agrarians is by no means the picnic diversion

of a group of envious highbrows. The Agrarians long ago disclaimed any allegiance to picnic regionalism and labored to distinguish between the superficial phenomenon and the real thing. Writing in *The New Republic* nearly six years before Beath's attack in *The Saturday Review* upon regionalism, Allen Tate defined regionalism as "the immediate, organic sense of life in which a fine artist works," and distinguished this regionalism which is the voice of genuine tradition, from the regionalism which is merely documentary, antiquarian, or picturesque. "A selfconscious regionalism," he said, "destroys tradition with its perpetual discovery of it; makes it clumsy and sterile."

Somewhat later, in an essay, "Don'ts for Literary Regionalists," in *The American Review,* Robert Penn Warren attacked the "get-rich-quick psychology" of the regionalists who treat regionalism as simply another literary invention, a facet of our general eclecticism. Warren listed six errors into which such regionalists might fall:

(1) Regionalism is not quaintness and local color and folklore, for those things when separated from a functional idea are merely a titillation of the reader's sentimentality or snobbishness....

(2) Regionalism based on the literary exploitation of a race or society that has no cultural continuity with our own tends to be false and precious. It is a touristic regionalism....

(3) Regionalism does not necessarily imply an emphasis on the primitive or underprivileged character.... There is a literature of false primitivism as well as the literature of superficial sophistication; and most of this literature has claimed the label of regionalism....

(4) Regionalism does not mean that a writer should relinquish any resource of speculation or expression that he has managed to achieve.... A writer's worst dishonesty would be to deny, on the ground of theory, part of his own temper and own resource; to limit, arbitrarily, the sensibility he would bring to his material....

(5) Regionalism does not mean that literature is tied to its region for appreciation.... [It] does not imply in any way a relaxing of critical standards....

(6) Even literary regionalism is more than a literary matter, and is not even primarily a literary matter....The danger in regionalism lies in its last syllable, in the *ism*. As a fad it is meaningless.

Such "don'ts" have been overlooked enough even in the years when the centrifugal movement of American art has become more marked and purposeful than in the nineteen-twenties. Yet despite their violation of such principles as those indicated, the "literary regionalists" of the sort condemned testified, at least, to the enormous power of the centrifugal force. The criticisms of Tate and Warren, both of them poets schooled in the great tradition and able to command, in verse or prose, the full technical resources of modern art, indicate that a serious revolution had broken out where modernism might have been thought secure. Like their predecessors of several past generations in England and America, these writers and others like them were engaged in the search for a "usable past" which had troubled Western art since the beginning of the Renaissance. We should not forget that the Renaissance itself began with the selfconscious recovery of the Greek Tradition. For five hundred years the peoples of the West have seen a series of advances and recessions in art, brought on by the continuous destruction of society under the auspices of scientific rationalism, and by the compensatory effort of the artist, gradually dissociated from intimate relationship with society, to find the kind of art that will be socially valid without injury to its own worth and integrity.

William Butler Yeats and T. S. Eliot are two late examples of this long quest. Both have attacked cosmopolitanism at its weakest point—its failure of inner conviction. In his prophetic poem, "The Second Coming," Yeats writes:

Things fall apart; the centre will not hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

In "The Waste Land" Eliot, using a rich and complicated symbolism, condemns modern life as a regime which defiles and dries up life itself at its fountain-head. He draws a picture of hordes wandering leaderless over cracked and sterile plains, while great cities fall in ruins. For Yeats, tradition is to be recovered in a poetry and drama which rest upon a foundation of folk-belief and heroic memory, mixed with the ancient occult wisdom that furnishes a universal symbolism through which "the great mind" of the race can speak. For Eliot, recovery of tradition demands a revived version of united Christendom, in which authoritative religion, conservative politics, and classic art can blend harmoniously. For Eliot, European art from Homer to the present day represents a single unified tradition in which the artist may work; but, with no traditional society to support him, the artist can fix upon no single set of assumptions to animate his art, and hence is forced into a difficult reconcilement of scattered and conflicting phenomena. In the poetry of John Donne and his school, Eliot and many of his more thoughtful contemporaries found a procedure for dealing with incongruities. And so, in the nineteen-twenties, John Donne became as important to many poets as Spenser was to Milton or Shakespeare to Keats.

The analogous search for a "usable past" in America, however, did not need to limit itself to the terms enforced in Europe. If the artist stayed within those terms, he would necessarily take the Humanist position, and argue for an ethical, purposeful art which must somehow be superimposed, in the Arnoldian way, upon a materialistic urban society. Or else he might, with the Communist, become frankly materialistic and anti-traditional. But the dilemma was a false one unless America was destined soon to be entirely cosmo-

politanized. The "usable past" of America, it seemed to many, was not destroyed but only threatened; it was embodied in and deeply interwoven with the regional differentiations that actually existed. American traditions as active forces could be apprehended only if they were approached from the vantage-point of a living regional heritage, which worked with the artist rather than against him.

But any realistic consideration of the American scene was likely to bring home to the serious artist the social issue as well as the artistic issue. Theodore Dreiser, Allen Tate pointed out, has "nothing that he can assume, because he does not know a kind of life where people assume anything." Was it inevitable that all American art should have as little assumption in it as Dreiser's fiction? Or did the regions provide, or promise to provide, a locus, physical and spiritual, in which association might replace dissociation, and thus furnish within the regional tradition the cultural assumptions often lacking in modern art? If the latter course were possible, there was a defense to be made on the economic and social front as well as on the artistic front. For better or worse, the more thorough-going regionalists soon found themselves engaged in a many-sided battle.

But no matter what the theories, regionalism might also be considered as a process actually going on. The rejection of New York was not a poet's dream. It was a real rejection, with something of the practical in it. The American regions, especially those of the South and West, were all stirring with a consciousness of the validity of their own way of life. It was inevitable that the artists of those regions should explore and cultivate the differentiation already attained. The new regional consciousness was no sudden phenomenon, whipped up by romantic agitators. Basically, it was the old human desire of the particular as the complement or foil of the universal

which industrialism in business and modernism in art had made entirely too abstract.

The Great American Bandwagon was indeed well loaded with tooters who tromboned brassily repetitive accompaniments to the cornets of the chambers of commerce. But only a New York reporter could miss seeing how, at the same time, the American people were becoming passionately historical and local. The historian of American culture could note the new interest in genealogy that packed state libraries with amateur researchists, the increased activity of historical societies and memorial associations, the solicitude to erect landmarks and preserve shrines. The swelling tourist trade could not be caught merely by the flimsy adequacies of chain hotels repeating one pattern from New York to New Orleans. Tourists were looking not only for resorts and "scenic drives," but for historic places, old houses, battlefields, the homes of heroes. The Rockefellers restored Williamsburg to its colonial form; and a wave of reverence raised up again crumbling edifices from Fort Ticonderoga in the North to Middleton Place in Charleston and on to the ancient houses, fortifications, missions, and churches of the West. Where the old buildings had vanished, they were "reconstructed," as at New Salem in Illinois, Schoenbrun in Ohio, Fort Nashboro at Nashville. Georgia sent a historical commission to report on the moot question of whether certain crumbling buildings of the low country might be Spanish forts or merely old sugar houses. The Southwest, recalling Coronado, suddenly claimed an antiquity that far antedated Plymouth or Jamestown. Family mansions were rebuilt, sometimes by migrant *nouveaux riches*, sometimes by the devoted heirs. Residence architecture turned colonial. Even that reputed agent of uniformity, the automobile, as it carried millions of Americans from one "tourist house" to another and flashed day after day through the changing landscape, acquainted its passengers with the diver-

sity of America and the local peculiarities of regions. All this came in the midst of the new selfconsciousness brought by the popularity of the new history and the new historical fiction, while electric power, the pressure of economics, and the study of regional needs were making decentralization a fact.

So far as the mass of American citizens were concerned, we must grant that regionalism was more influential in economics and politics than in the arts. There were no regional academies of art to parallel the New England Council's "planning" in regional economics. Artists did not become regional spokesmen merely by proclaiming regional allegiance and acting upon it. If they got attention at home, it came from being attended to in New York. Allen Tate's meditations, in "The Profession of Letters in the South," upon the lack of a literary tradition to support the Southern artist, apply with almost equal weight to all the regions, even to the dominant East itself. Of every region it can be said, as he says of the South, that while each contains a unified culture, there is rarely a cultural landmark, of an artistic nature, "so conspicuous that the people may be reminded by it constantly of what they are." Acknowledgment of such landmarks comes, if it comes at all, in retrospect. The politically minded South, after driving out Edgar Allan Poe, later claims him as a Southern writer, just as the East, after similar behavior, claims Herman Melville, or the West, Mark Twain. In a money-minded country, where art is inglorious until the specific art-piece becomes a measurable "success," hardly anything else can happen. In nineteenth-century England about the same thing happened to many great men of letters; and modern Ireland at first greeted Yeats and Synge with jeers and rioting.

Nevertheless, in the nineteen-thirties the publishing houses of the East were quick to perceive the strength of the "regional" appeal. They might be credited with knowing the minds of the regions, at times, better than did the people of

the regions themselves. Perhaps this strange situation illustrated the operation of the law of economics that made some Northern manufacturers, during the War Between the States, not scruple to sell ammunition to the Confederates. By a curious paradox, Eastern publishers were the agents of a process which, by helping to stir and awaken regional consciousness, undermined the strategic position of New York as a literary capital.

Yet regional spokesmen in the arts, whether encouraged at home or not, were working in alliance both with the spirit of the times and with the unexpressed, ill-defined social tendencies of the regions to which they felt irresistibly drawn. Feeling this, and perhaps imbued with as much of prophetic impulse as rebelliousness, they began, here and there in the nineteen-thirties, to declare themselves as advocates of regionalism. What they often spoke of, at first, was their distrust of borrowed attitudes. They wanted to write of Gopher Prairie in terms of itself, not in terms of what New York might think of Gopher Prairie. While they disclaimed any interest in mere local color and were ready to use what seemed good in modern techniques, they were more likely to explore the idiom of Gopher Prairie than to copy the New York copy of James Joyce. They fought against the danger of losing their identity —of becoming modernist at the expense of being Southern or Western—even while they knew how impossible it was to cut themselves off from the art and thought of the Occident.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the early debates over regionalism had a forced, hypothetical tone, or that some of the deliberate attempts to cultivate the arts locally should yield comparatively trivial results. In *The Southwest Review* a group of creative writers and students of folklore argued over the question whether the Southwest "can or should develop a culture recognizable as unique, and more satisfying and profound than our present imported cul-

ture and art." The drift of opinion was toward a separate role for the Southwest—a role that would set it apart even from the South. "I despair of conveying to an Easterner, or even to a Virginian," wrote Henry Smith, "the sense of strangeness with which a Southwesterner visits New Orleans, or reads the books coming out of the Deep South." J. Frank Dobie called for "cattlebrands and not signs of the zodiac" to decorate the façades of Southwestern buildings. B. A. Botkin, editor of *Folk-Say* and devoted advocate, at that time, of regionalism, held that the Southwest enjoys enormous advantages in comparison with "the immigrant melting pot of the East" and "the sterile provincialism that decadent isolation or imitation has given to New England and the South." Only Mary Austin was willing to cloud the prospects of regional culture with the observation that Southwesterners—presumably such as might be found in progressive Dallas—seemed more interested "in possessing the assets of other cultures than in producing anything of their own."

Other Western writers were inclined to state their regional secession in a more guarded form than the ebullient Southwesterners, though they were no less scornful toward the idea of uniformity. Ruth Suckow, writing in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1930, said:

> I do not see how it would be possible for any one to travel across country by automobile . . . and arrive at either coast with a remembrance made up wholly of noise, dirt, mechanical industry, and ugly provincialism. . . . He must travel with the blinders of prejudice and preconception if he perceives only what is alike, and not what is different. . . . At the end of such a journey, the much-talked-of standardization of gasoline stations and chain stores seems nothing but a hasty superstructure erected of necessity . . . to bridge the gaps of an overwhelming variety.

At the same time, carefully dissociating herself from the more sentimental school of the folklorists, Miss Suckow held

that all of America was bound by "something deeply homogeneous . . . the real basis of American civilization—the folks. . . . The folk idea in America has become the idea of 'folks.'" Miss Suckow's novel, *The Folks*, published some years later, worked out this pluralistic thesis by relating the fortunes of all the members of a good-sized Middle Western family. The loneliest figure in this novel is the girl who leaves the homely country of "the folks" to enjoy the artily exciting life of New York. In this and other books the tables were being turned: the hinterland was attacking New York.

In such changes of attitude, rather than in manifestoes and symposia, we may trace the abandonment by the Middle West of the literary convention of the twenties and the shift toward a new base, more regional, surely, than non-regional. Magazines like John Frederick's *The Midland* and H. G. Merriam's *The Frontier* had already stood valiantly for the cause if not for the explicit theory of regionalism. If the Middle Western artist was slow to take up the theory, it may have been because of a reluctance to admit that his own country could by any stretch of the imagination be cooped within anything so narrow as a regional boundary. He was fairly sure that the West, in any of its variations, was so independently and typically American that it could not fail of national acceptance. It did not occur to him that this cocksureness, in its come-no-nonsense belligerency (to be found in Bernard De Voto's slaughter of Van Wyck Brooks or in Paul Beath's dismissal of regionalism as petty) was really the most bouncing and rampant form that regional affirmation could take.

In the Old South, or the Southeast, the regional tradition expressed itself with a vigor that almost deserves the name of a literary movement. It is hardly proper to call this movement a renaissance. It was an expression of a spirit that had never before in the South's history fully taken on a creative shape.

Before the nineteen-twenties had passed, the South was contributing more than its proportionate share of poetry, fiction, drama, and criticism. But, like the Middle Western writers on whom attention was centered in the post-war years, the new Southern writers were strongly influenced by the prevalent spirit of critical realism. To share in a modern outlook meant for many of them an acute division of purposes. The drift of the times, for which the progressivism of Walter H. Page and Henry Grady had earlier prepared the South, made them sensitive to the metropolitan view of Southern life as backward and unworthy. At the same time, they belonged to the South, they knew and felt their own tradition, and they found an audience eager to hear whatever account they might give of it.

Under the pressure of this dilemma they tended either to romanticize too much or to criticize too much. One group wrote charmingly of mountaineers or Negroes, as did DuBose Heyward and Julia Peterkin. Another, following the lead of Ellen Glasgow and James Branch Cabell, took refuge in romantic irony; still others trimmed their art to fit the demand for a Southern realism that would seem realistic on the northern side of the Potomac. In the numerous array of Southern writers who crowded the scene during the nineteen-twenties, the Southern tradition speaks, but speaks under a repression that often twists it out of character. The struggle of loyalties subdues this writer too far, or releases that writer into a shallow emancipation. Thus, while the names of Southern writers filled reviewers' columns, and literary groups flourished in many quarters, there was not in the twenties anything but a tentative, unformulated answer to the question of divided loyalties. Most Southern writers seemed to think that they could not acknowledge their obligations to art without at the same time repudiating the Southern past and accepting the progressive view of the Southern present.

The twelve Southerners who in 1930 announced their views in *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition* disavowed the progressive view itself as unfit for Southern needs and as in many respects a betrayal of what was most worth cherishing. The times had changed, they said. It was folly for Southerners to twist themselves into awkward conformity with a social ideal which, at heart, they found repugnant, and which was already breaking down throughout the world. These writers, who were soon to be called the Southern Agrarians, proposed, not a literal reëstablishment of older Southern principles and traditions, but a new application of these principles to the current situation.

The past, they granted, was not recoverable in its old form. Nevertheless, the way of life, or the set of cultural and economic preferences that united the Southern states, had survived its historic reverses so persistently as to have new merit for a country hideously entangled in the fluctuating ways of the industrial regime. The Agrarians declared the system of large-scale industrialism and high finance unsound economically and deceptive in its humanitarian motivation: it led not to a liberal order but to some form of the servile state. The traditions of the South, bound up with the ways of land and people, they defined as agrarian, conservative, stable, religious. They sought to frame, not so much a theory of economics as a philosophy of life, in which both economics and art would find their natural places and not be dissociated into abstract means and abstract ends, as the pseudo-culture of the world-city would dissociate them.

In this book the Agrarians did not discuss regionalism. In their agitation of certain issues, particularly in their avowal of the essential rightness and timeliness of some of the contentions of the antebellum South, they revived questions that had once brought sectional feeling to white heat. Some of their contemporaries in the South feared that an alarming recrudes-

cence of sectional feeling might result from such agitation. Others viewed them as harmless literary eccentrics, tilting at windmills. But neither the timidity of one group of critics nor the condescension of the other could obscure the ultimate importance of the issues as the Agrarians had stated them. The question of whether the South would continue to be the colonial dependency of the East, in politics and economics as in art, was a question which the South, as a region, could not indefinitely evade.

As the course of events proved, the statement of issues which had a special meaning for the South also had some general meaning within the nation. In their fight against giant industrialism and its obverse, giant socialism, the Agrarians in effect were redefining the Jeffersonian principles that had set America off from Europe and had played an important part in forming American character. In their attempt at redefinition they soon found that others were inclined to join forces with them.

Among these, Herbert Agar, in his *Land of the Free*, stated the contemporary American issue as a struggle between culture and colonialism: or between the native democratic tradition, which, sustained by a society based upon agriculture and widely distributed property, could still secure liberty to the people; and the Hamiltonian, or European, tradition of plutocracy and big business. In his books, on the lecture platform, and in the columns of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* Agar carried on an eloquent campaign for doctrines that combined agrarian and distributist views. In 1936, under the editorship of Herbert Agar and Allen Tate, the Agrarians joined with other groups and individuals of closely allied views in publishing a second symposium, *Who Owns America?* This book, far broader in its application than *I'll Take My Stand*, not only gave the general outline of agrarian and distributist principles, but also indicated clearly that the Southern

Agrarians were but one of many determined groups of Americans who were enlisted against the common foe, giant industrialism, or, as Agar had put it, "the giant world-city, with its cosmopolitanism, its skepticism, its falling birth-rate, its lack of morals, its imitative and then its decadent art." In this battle were united such widely scattered advocates as the Agrarians, Agar and other American Distributists, Seward Collins and *The American Review*, those who followed Ralph Borsodi in his ideas for domesticating the machine and restoring the self-sufficiency of the home, and representatives of co-operative groups and leaders of the great Catholic movement for restoring rural life. Whatever their differences, all were anti-cosmopolitan, anti-monopolistic; and the consensus of their ideas favored the growing tendency toward regional autonomy.

In arguing the Southern case and in exploring the general American situation, the Agrarians themselves had by implication supplied something like a solid foundation to artistic regionalism. Regionalism was not to be taken as an "escape," or an appropriation, by an act of the will, of some partial aspect of American life. It was not merely folklore, though it rested upon folkways. But it was, like sectionalism in politics, the natural condition of the arts among a people united in a general culture and living under a Federal government, but divided by the process of pioneering and settlement into cultural areas that could not be forced into any narrow pattern of national art.

This is an inference to be drawn from the position of the Southern Agrarians, rather than a point that they have very specifically promulgated. It has been argued and elaborated by others, and by none better than Joseph E. Baker of Iowa, who discussed the question in his "Four Arguments for Regionalism," published in *The Saturday Review*. These arguments cover somewhat the same ground as Warren, in

his "Dont's for Regionalists." To those negatives, however, must be added still another, emphasized by Baker: that there is no central point in the United States which has the right or the lasting power to exercise artistic and cultural sovereignty over the whole nation. Communication of course is easy. The natural mobility of art-modes will eternally result in a shift of emphasis from one region to another as time goes on; but no monopoly such as New England enjoyed in its Golden Day or New York in its Paper Age can any longer be an assured feature of American art.

If we take this view of regionalism, all that needs to be abandoned is the notion that a root-and-branch transplantation to some central capital is the artist's first necessity. All that needs to be affirmed is the broad principle that the arts flourish best when the artist, without undue protestation or penalty, can seek his own means of achieving "the mysterious union of indigenous materials and foreign influences" of which Allen Tate speaks; and can do so with the force of an accepted tradition, vital among his own people, to help carry him along. In the normal course of things, we may expect that the indigenous materials will derive some of their shape and force from the *genius loci*—the region itself—and thus become a foreign influence pervading other regions, and giving as well as receiving. In any case the artist will *be* a Westerner as Mark Twain was a Westerner, without having to debate his course or listen to its being debated for him. He will not have to *become* a Westerner, as the regionalist of today so often does. If we are to have an American art at all, it implies this condition of affairs. The regions will develop their arts as they develop their people and ways of life.

This condition, far from being a temporary phenomenon produced as a reaction against the cosmopolitanism of the nineteen-twenties, may be thought of as the normal condition

of the arts in the United States. Always we have had the interplay of strong indigenous tendencies with the general Occidental tradition from which America stems, and to which, with its true colonial period now definitely past, it is a distinct and powerful contributing force. Looking back, we may see periods when current European modes threaten to engulf all that is American—when all is swallowed up in imitation, which of course leaves permanent results, fructifying or deadening. But at such moments the spokesman of the native strain appears upon the scene, as Emerson did in the Golden Day, or Mark Twain in the Gilded Age, and by precept and example exhorts his countrymen to work with their own hands. Because of the peculiar composition of the American nation, he will inevitably be the voice of a region which for the moment assumes the mantle of leadership. But after a time this dominance will end, and leadership will pass for a while to another region, which may be stimulated by another wave of foreign influence or may be reacting against it.

In broad outline this cycle of change may be followed out in Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought,* where the development of an economic-political thesis makes the history of American literature in large part a study in sectionalism and nationalism, roughly parallel to Turner's study of general American history. When Parrington chose, as he said, "to follow the broad path of our political, economic, and social development, rather than the narrower belletristic," the thesis determined for him, as did the frontier thesis for Turner, a mature consideration of the part played by the sections and their spokesmen. While it made clear the basis of differentiation between American and English literature, it forced an acceptance of sectional differentiation as a condition of the development of an American national literature. And so Parrington, even for the colonial period, deals with "Puritan New England" and "Jefferson and back-country agrarianism."

He notes that colonial liberalism itself, at the time of the Revolution, was not "so simple and homogeneous as we long believed," but was "a somewhat vague composite of the aspirations of three diverse geographical areas, with different economic interests, social ways, and political ideas." These areas, or sections, or regions were: "the middle and northern coast region, with its mercantile cities . . . ; the tidewater region from Maryland to Georgia, with its plantation economy . . . ; and the indefinite backcountry beyond the older settlements, stretching from Maine southward along the Alleghany watershed." In the history of the Republic of the nineteenth century, the divisions become more definitely sectional. Parrington writes of "The Mind of the South," which itself is subdivided into a sphere of Virginia, of South Carolina, and of Western influence; of "The Mind of the Middle East," and "The Mind of New England."

The same tale may be read in the rise and fall of our literary capitals. The major capitals of our intellectual and artistic life have been Boston and New York. There have also been minor capitals: the New York of Irving's day, Philadelphia, Richmond, Charleston, San Francisco, Chicago, and so on. The lesser capitals are not to be called provincial—unless we use the word as Josiah Royce used it, to signify the equivalent of regional. They signify a principle of variety, of cultural self-determination, of "love and pride which leads the inhabitants of a province to cherish as their own . . . traditions, beliefs, and aspirations."

Boston became a capital because it was the seat and focus of a highly developed New England culture, and the New England stamp was long an apparently national stamp. So great was New England's prestige, as well as its achievement, and so secure was its command over the channels of education and critical judgment throughout the nation, that its sectional bias went unchallenged for years. Yet eventually it had to be

challenged. The mind of New England, for all the splendor of its achievement, was not after all the national mind. New England and Boston had to yield the pre-eminence to New York, which represented a combination of Northeastern wealth and ideas with a powerful wave of European influence.

And now it is New York's turn to yield. The weakness of New York is that in becoming world-city and *entrepreneur* between Europe and the American hinterland, it broke the ties, intellectual and sentimental, that might have bound it to America—or, at least, might have bound it to its own region, as intimately as Boston to New England. But the intellectual gap between New York City and Maine, or even upper New York State, is almost as profound as the gap between New York and Mississippi. Although its position is not yet endangered in a material sense, since it is still a literary bazaar, with enormous economic power in the arts, it is nevertheless opposed, and will continue to be opposed by those tendencies in distant regions which mark a new turn toward the indigenous, a wide diffusion of the arts, and an increasing amount of regional self-reliance. This is a more formidable resistance than Boston had to meet, for it does not originate in frontier regions, hardly more than colonies, but in matured regions or sections, stable and selfconscious.

The pattern of American literature—and to a less degree of other arts—is not to be described adequately if sectional or regional terms are excluded. Hawthorne and Mark Twain are both genuinely American writers in some sense not easily demonstrable, as they are also "universal" writers. It is hard to decide what "American" or "national" qualities they have in common; but it is easy to discover their regional differentiations and to see them as unconscious spokesmen of the traditions which shaped them. They are "unconscious regionalists" —the best kind. The Local Color school of the seventies were nearer to the selfconscious regionalism of our own day. But

again, they are not to be viewed as isolated phenomena. The new research into the work of minor American authors has brought forth to view local colorists in every period of American literature, in every part of the country.

As we look back at the years when American literature seemed about to be de-regionalized, or centralized, we realize how shallow was the criticism which would have misled us into thinking that Frost and Robinson had repudiated their New England, Masters and Lindsay their Middle West, Ellen Glasgow and William Faulkner their South. The strength of such writers is in something deeper than technological advance and urban theories of art. It derives from what is back of them. It is in the combination that their individual genius, sensitive both to their times and to their heritage, has been able to make. What has been our "contemporary" literature (it must soon receive a more permanent name!) draws its abundance and life not from one source but from many. New York, as capital, could never have called it into being. Nor can New York, it seems, offer to American art the "humane federalism" of which Joseph E. Baker speaks in his discussion of regionalism. If that comes at all in the future, through some single city, that city will lie inland. It will be nearer to the Mississippi than to the Thames and the Seine. But more likely, American art will have no fixed intellectual center, and perhaps the function of distribution now all but monopolized by New York will eventually be divided.

To sum up, there appear to be three important aspects of regionalism as an artistic force.

First is the selfconscious regionalism which is the inevitable counter to a hard-driving cosmopolitanism. No matter what defects the critic may find in it, it is, to use the words of John Crowe Ransom, "as reasonable as non-regionalism, whatever the latter may be called: cosmopolitanism, progressivism, industrialism, free trade, interregionalism, inter-

nationalism, eclecticism, liberal education, the federation of the world, or simple rootlessness; so far as the anti-regional philosophy is crystallized in such doctrines."

Second, there is the regionalism which, while selfconscious, is aware of the artistic problem as involved with other problems, and, refusing to isolate the arts either by one or another form of abstraction, seeks to prepare the ground for their healthy growth. This regionalism must bear the burden of its selfconsciousness, which indeed is both the animating principle and the evil genius of modern art. It may take courage from the fact that its selfconsciousness is more positive than negative. The test of merit, for this regionalism, is in the honesty and intellectual courage with which it faces the total problem.

Last, there is the regionalism which is unselfconscious—which is so much in the normal course of life that it cannot be recognized as regionalism by the artist himself. The less we have of insistence that the United States must become "all one thing, or all the other," the more we shall have of this kind of regionalism: more, that is, of a really American art of such generally acknowledged variety and indigenous strength that the battle between regionalism and cosmopolitanism will no longer need to be fought.

V. Federation or Disunion: The Political Economy of Regionalism

From many different branches of social study, surveying many different kinds of evidence, one conclusion emerges: sectionalism, or, if one prefers, regionalism, is a persistent and very likely an inherent condition of democratic government in the United States. The only persons who deny this conclusion are those who deny that democratic government can continue. They are extremists who, whether they call themselves idealists or pragmatists, agree in believing that the Leviathan State, in not only a national form but a world form, is necessary to secure to humankind the equal benefits of technological advance, to which they would sacrifice all else. These men, like the followers of Mahomet, will hear no appeal to reason, but will choose rather to put unbelievers to the sword. They are, however, impotent to make that simple and bloody choice as long as the Old Adam, well intrenched in diverse America, makes up his own individual or regional mind, and so fails to provide the general uniformity which necessarily precedes the establishment of a Leviathan State.

How diverse is America? We have all been impressed, as the believers in Leviathan have been, by the majesty and power of the great Federal Union; we have all looked with awe at the far-flung network of the industrial system. And yet we are just beginning to realize that the Federal Union

and the industrial system, despite their substantial bulk, do not encompass all that we are as a nation or furnish instruments that express and serve the national commonweal.

We do not know what to call a citizen of the United States. *American* is a large word, to which Eskimo, Cuban, and Brazilian also have some claim. Our most characteristic songs are those which embody sectional experience, like "Old Kentucky Home," "John Brown's Body," "Home on the Range"; nobody can remember the words or sing the tune of the officially national songs, like "Star Spangled Banner." Our literature, folklore, history, accent, and dialect dissolve the national complex into sectional and regional entities. Rivers, mountain ranges, deserts, degrees of latitude and longitude, differences of soil and climate divide us. We are a land of special sects and communities to whom by old tradition as well as by law we accord tolerance; the Dunkards and Mennonites in the Northeast and the Middle States; the Holy Rollers, the Melungeons, the Croatans, the Cajuns, in the Southeast; the Mormons, greatest of modern religious colonizers, in Utah; the devotees of Aimee MacPherson and other sainted evangels on the Pacific Coast.

We are a nation of mixed populations. The different racial strains, though somewhat diffused, also exist in noticeable sectional concentrations. The largest proportion of the old colonial stock, relative to "foreign" strains, is in the states of the South; but there the Scotch-Irish and English stock lives side by side with the Afro-Americans. In the Northeast have concentrated the recent waves of immigration, chiefly from Mediterranean and Central-European stocks: the Italians, Greeks, Portuguese, the Jews from many countries, the Slavs are superimposed upon the earlier Catholic-Irish immigrants; only in upper New England and New York does the old colonial stock maintain its hold, and even there is it somewhat invaded by French-Canadian *habitants*. The Ger-

mans, though scattered everywhere from earliest colonial days, have their strongest concentration in the states of the Middle West, where in certain special areas west of the Mississippi the latest immigrant wave has been Scandinavian. The aboriginal Indian population, except for a few negligible fragments, is west of the Mississippi, chiefly in the Great Plains environment. The Mexicans are in the Southwest. The Orientals—Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos—are in the Far West.

The industrial revolution, that great agent of uniformity, has spread everywhere; but its influence as a leveller is weakening, its force is not exerted uniformly, its gains in some quarters are now known to be losses in other quarters. Americans of the nineteen-thirties, it is true, dress alike, read the same books and periodicals and advertisements, hear the same radio programs, follow the same sports, use the same machines, and buy the same industrial products. And so, too, did the Americans of the eighteen-thirties—who dressed like Lord Byron or Andrew Jackson, ordered the carriage instead of telephoning the garage, and lived in houses (if they could afford new houses) of the newfangled Greco-Jeffersonian style. In manners and culture, there was probably more uniformity in America a hundred years ago, at the outset of the industrial revolution, than there is today. The industrial revolution is, in fact, driven into decentralization if it would save itself. The sections have not been levelled into one national interest by industrialism, but have been forced more and more into competition, as they have developed specialized interests and then, seeing their difficulties, have striven to correct the balance.

Organized labor is strong in one section and weak in another. It is conservative here, but radical there. The agricultural interest refuses, despite all argument, to combine with the labor interest. The South and West want low industrial prices; the Northeast prefers low prices for foods and raw materials.

Railroads are losing their monopoly of transportation. The automobile, deft and quick, draws localities and sections together even while it serves long-range business and pleasure.[1] Power is diffused everywhere. The arts seek widely scattered abodes. The cities fail to reproduce their population, as immigration is stopped; but the country districts teem with new life. The prevalence of local traditions, the variance of laws, the long accumulations of sectional legend and history, the habits of place as well as the habits of time—all this emphasizes the parts, which are joined but not fused into a whole. All this divides us—and divides us sectionally.

What unites us? The fundamental bond of union is the desire for union, which, hallowed by time, custom, and long increase of honor, has grown into the tradition of union. The instrument of union is a Federal government, embracing the several states under a written constitution; but this instrument would be empty but for the tradition. The tradition of union which "we the people of the United States" make "more perfect" in the habit of daily life is what makes the Constitution a necessary and living thing. This tradition, operating through the government to which we give our consent, is the first and most important check upon sectional chauvinism and possibility of disunion.

There are other checks and other bonds of union in the character of the sections themselves. There are no sectional languages or religions. People are everywhere habituated to democracy and to the same type of political instruments. Furthermore, the sections have within themselves minority groups,

[1] "It is not improbable that this intensification of local contacts plays a part in the preservation and even in the enlargement of local patterns of attitude, habit, and behavior, and serves as an inhibitor of the process of cultural levelling which is so often assumed as an outstanding and unopposed tendency of American life."—Willey and Rice, "Communication Agencies and Social Life," in *Recent Social Trends.*

which may not fall in with dominant sectional trends; these, the subsections or subregions, help to restrain sectional action and facilitate the technique of sectional compromise.

Last, the political parties are national, or must assume to be national, even though they may not, in practice, always support the true national interest. In national elections and in the workings of the Federal government, our political parties, whether they ardently desire it or not, legislate and administer with a show of justice for the nation as a whole, or at least with no injustice so gross as to stir up protest and reprisal. Furthermore, the major parties are two in number. The advent of many parties, Americans instinctively know, would be the prelude to sectional conflict of the most severe kind.

Yet, over and above all these bonds of unity, it is necessary to understand that we are a diverse people, and that we cannot exist as a nation but as a sectionally diverse people. The recognition of sectional diversity is the true safeguard of national unity. The danger to national unity comes when diversity is ignorantly or willfully put aside as a thing of no importance, or when it is assumed that no diversity exists. The greatest present threat to the Federal Union comes, not from any rising sectional movement, but from the advocacy and the more than incipient growth of a Leviathan State which, like the young of the cowbird, hatching where it did not build, shoulders the native brood from the nest. We have come to a time when we must decide once more upon the domain and character of the Federalism that unites us. We must see in it not only the terms upon which union is achieved, but also the threat of division that will certainly come from any crude and thoughtless enlargement of a Federal government into a pseudo-national government. No Leviathan State can ever abolish sectionalism, unless like Tamerlane it proposes to rule from a pyramid of skulls. More likely, the attempt to abolish sectionalism will only lead to the abolishment of national gov-

ernment. What a Leviathan State might do, by too strenuous generalizations and applications of power, would be to provoke a sectional reaction so severe as to bring civil conflict; or else, not being able to deliver its own promises, it might fall into such weakness and loss of prestige that it could no longer govern and so might destroy itself rather than be destroyed from within or without.

But happily this possibility is beginning to be recognized. The diversity of America is being taken into consideration by those who ought to know how to deal with it. Their task is difficult, for it requires them to find means of making sectional or regional differentiations effective in the Federal organism itself.

When the older school of American historians had to record the actions of contiguous groups of states that united to protect their common interests, they called the phenomenon *sectionalism* and stigmatized it as anti-national. The younger historians—and with them sociologists, political scientists, economists, and even men of letters—encountering the same phenomenon, name it regionalism and hail it with geniality or at least with resignation. To them it is not an anti-national force but the condition itself of nationalism in a country as large and as notably diverse in its geographic divisions as our country is. Seemingly they grant that the nation has already fulfilled a prophecy made nearly twenty years ago by F. J. Turner. If the reader will substitute the more fashionable word *region* for the word *section* in the passage which follows, he will have a description of the sort of nation that students of regionalism now believe the United States to be. Turner said:

> ...As the nation reaches a more stable equilibrium, a more settled state of society, with denser populations pressing upon the means of existence, with this population no longer migratory,

the influence of the diverse physiographic provinces which make up the nation will become more marked. They will exercise sectionalizing influences, tending to mould society to their separate conditions, in spite of all the countervailing tendencies toward national uniformity. National action will be forced to recognize and adjust itself to these conflicting sectional interests. The more the nation is organized on the principle of direct majority rule, and consolidation, the more sectional resistance is likely to manifest itself. Statesmen in the future, as in the past, will achieve their leadership by voicing the interests and ideas of the sections which have shaped these leaders, and they will exert their influence nationally by making combinations between sections and by accommodating their policy to the needs of such alliances. Congressional legislation will be shaped by compromises and combinations, which will in effect be treaties between rival sections, and the real federal aspect of our government will lie, not in the relation of state and nation, but in the relation of section and nation.

The aptness of Turner's prophecy can now be seen by all but the dullest observers. The "diverse physiographic provinces," with their separate regional cultures, can be mapped with some definiteness. In rough outline, with subregions granted as also having their importance, they are: the Northeast, the South or Southeast, the Middle West, the Southwest, the Far West. Population has grown denser; it presses upon the means of production if not upon the means of existence. Economic specialization has encouraged marked regional interests: there is a financial-industrial Northeast, a cotton-tobacco-and-small-farm Southeast, a wheat-and-corn Middle West, an oil-and-cotton Southwest, a fruit-truck-and-lumber Far West. The newer regions in their maturity have developed a regional self-consciousness as marked as in the older regions. Regional interests clash and are represented by warring statesmen: a Long, a Nye, a Moses, a La Guardia, a Norris. Above all, the policy of economic nationalism developed under the Roosevelt administration—and likely to be continued, if stu-

dents of affairs argue correctly, under succeeding administrations—represents a determined effort to secure the "stable equilibrium" which Turner foretold. It is being achieved by a pressure of regional "combinations" (South and West) against a resisting and greatly apprehensive Northeast.

Only the last clause of Turner's prophecy remains unfulfilled, partly, it may be, because it touches a problem not only unsolved, but not understood, not even dimly visualized in some high quarters. There is no general readiness of our statesmen to acknowledge that the true Federalism consists in the relation of region (or "section") and nation. We still insist upon the letter of the Constitution and hold that Federalism lies in the relation of state and nation. Nothing, indeed, in Turner's remark could be taken as an advocacy of change. As historian he was concerned only to say what the real Federal relation seemed to be. To grasp this reality by some political instrumentation which would replace the fiction of the older Federalism was not his task. Possibly he meant to leave only the implication that, if no change should be made, the regional jockeying and compromising would go on indefinitely behind the Federal screen.

To solve the problem of the new Federalism must be the task of this generation. If we decline to face the problem, some Turner of the future will pause in his lecture and say with emphasis: *At this point regional differences passed beyond the possibility of adjustment under the Federal system, and here, therefore, began the dismemberment of the United States, long since foreshadowed in the struggle of the eighteen-sixties.* But he might state a different result, now before us as a possibility: *At this point the ordinary processes of Federal government failed to serve the national purposes. A dictatorship ensued.*

In order to see what the problem is, it is necessary to recognize first of all that regional differentiations are social and

economic fact, and not poetic fiction. The skeptic who refuses the testimony of history, of sociological and economic findings, of studies in literature or folklore or physiography, will do well to turn traveller and receive the testimony of eye and ear. Or let him reflect upon the arrangement of a preëlection poll by regions or listen to the campaign talk of those who will tell how the West or the East will vote. The differentiations are the result of the occupation of a continental area by a vigorous people, habituated to a high degree of independence and self-determination, and shaped by diverse racial, social, political, and environmental influences. The history of the American establishment implies, if it does not enforce, diversity rather than uniformity. We can take little pride in the American tradition unless we concede that it tolerates and encourages such diversity. But it makes no difference whether we deplore or welcome regional differentiations. They are here, and even the most determined of economic determinists knows that they must be reckoned with.

The diversity of regions rather enriches the national life than impoverishes it. The mere existence of regions cannot be said to constitute a menace. Rather in their differences they are a national advantage, offering not only the charm of variety but the interplay of points of view that ought to give flexibility and wisdom. For the United States the ideal condition would be this: that the regions should be free to cultivate their own particular genius and to find their happiness, along with their sustenance and security, in the pursuits to which their people are best adapted, the several regions supplementing and aiding each other, in national comity, under a well-balanced economy.

This has not happened. They have not been good neighbors. They have continually quarrelled. Human nature being what it is, it might be beyond reason to expect otherwise. But, the American political genius being what it has been, we might

reasonably expect that some provision should be made for preventing conflict or moderating it when it occurs. No such means has been provided. The Federal Constitution, for reasons obvious to all who have studied it and know its history, not only does not make such provision, but by certain clauses prohibits regional combinations and in general thwarts regional expression.

This no doubt deliberate exclusion of regions from all legal consideration has not, in the long run, resulted in a true Federalism, nor has it even preserved the interest of states. Instead it has brought about regional imperialism. That is, it has encouraged the appropriation of Federal authority by the region which has had the means to lay hold upon it, and it has reduced other regions (and within them the states) to the position of accomplices or servile dependents.

There have been various attempts, some successful, some but partially successful, to use the Federal power in this way. The Jacksonian West, under Jackson, Van Buren, and Polk, exercised a form of regional imperialism which the Northeast might well think about, just now. Turner's posthumous book, *The United States, 1830-1850,* gives a detailed study of this imperialism. The long quarrel between North and South over the Western lands was a struggle of warring imperialisms, each eager to secure—always with due pretense of Federal sanction—the benefits of colonial territory. Of the South it might be said that its imperial designs did not contemplate imposing its peculiar institutions upon the sacred sod of Massachusetts. But the South feared, with justice, that Northern imperialism did most emphatically mean the substitution of an industrial system for an agrarian system south of the Potomac. Anticipating that event and finding itself without recourse, since it was out-voted under the Federal system, the South strove for independence.

The South was defeated and was haled back, in the status

of a subject province, into the shell of the old Union. In that condition, though with the barren comfort of technical political rights for its states, the South has remained. For from the moment of Southern defeat the regional imperialism of the Northeast began its effective reign.

In the sixty years from Grant to Hoover the United States have gone through the formality of sixteen presidential elections. The elected candidates, in the President's chair, and in Congress, were supposed to represent the people and to foster the general welfare. In practice, they represented the will of the Northeast and fostered the welfare of the Northeast. The Northeast has ruled, with occasional concessions to its turbulent and increasingly doubtful ally, the West. Through the agency of the Federal mechanism the Northeast has achieved its regional purposes: a high protective tariff; a gold standard; a treasury policy favorable to bankers and investors; a Fourteenth Amendment, "ratified" at the point of the bayonet, to safeguard corporations; an "open door" to its foreign imperialism in the West Indies, Central America, and the Pacific; and above all an "unprotected" area within the boundaries of the United States—"the greatest free trade area in the world"—for its commercial domain.

In these years the Northeast has been the imperial capital region, and the other regions, including even the West, have been the colonial dependencies from which it bought cheap and to which it sold dear, often enough with something added over and above high-tariff prices for interest on Northeastern money loaned to buy Northeastern goods. Grudgingly but wisely, the Northeast has yielded a point or two here and there—less to promote "national interest" than to soothe regional unrest: an Interstate Commerce Commission (which, though helpful to the West, has been notoriously unfavorable to the South); a Federal Income Tax (which Mr. Morgan in later years somehow did not have to pay); and a Federal

Reserve System (which looked pretty bad to Northeastern eyes—for a while). But in the main the Northeast did not yield too much. The fruits of its unyielding domination are there today for anybody to see, in its vast concentration of wealth and population, its splendid metropolitan centers, its universities, foundations, magazines, publishing houses, art galleries, museums, theaters, banks, harbors, its towering buildings envied by all the world, its sense of being well off —of being at the central strategic point.

There are other results of Northeastern imperialism. Although, since sinfulness knows no regions, it does little good now to load American sins upon a regional scapegoat, the fact remains that the Northeast has been the chief agent and the chief sponsor of the large-scale industrialism which we are now put to so much trouble to manage. The Northeast has manipulated the Federal mechanism so as to encourage, as a cardinal objective of national policy, a gross over-emphasis on industrialism and speculative finance, with a corresponding injury and neglect of agriculture and small business, to say nothing of the general injury resulting to manners, morals, and human happiness—in the Northeast as elsewhere. To be altogether fair, we should remember that some far-seeing Northeasterners have protested against this state of affairs—regional dissenters, reflective and doubtful. Nevertheless, if any one region is more guilty than another of having brought about by deliberate policy the crisis of the nineteen-thirties, that region is the Northeast.

At least the outlying regions of the West and South are inclined to draw the indictment thus. The West has a feeling of having been "played for a sucker." It now begins to see, what the South has long known, that under present arrangements a national policy that means wealth for the Northeast may well mean poverty for the sister regions. Northeastern imperialism somehow draws all to itself, and the crumbs from

Dives' table are no longer the surplusage but only the crumbs of a theoretically national feast. The old outcry against Wall Street is an outcry against a regional foe symbolized by a single institution. It means that the towers of New York are built upon Southern and Western backs.

Does the Northeasterner exclaim in horror at the spectacle of Southern lands eroded and worn-out, at the devilish one-crop system and the tenant system, at the burned and cut-over mountain slopes, the illiterate and diseased population, the fierce despair or the terrifying apathy of large districts, rural and urban? Let him never think that these sins against good order were always willfully committed or arose from human sloth and malignity alone. The ravaged lands of the South are, rather, a mute testimony, indeed a fearful accusation, against a distant tyranny of money—which the South did not have and was forced to try to gain.

The Southern planter or farmer (and not only the Southern one!) gullied and exhausted his lands, sold his timber, held his tenants pinned with a dollar mark, not because he was a limb of Satan but because money had to be forthcoming—and that quickly—for shoes and hats from tariff-protected factories; money for farm machinery, kerosene, gasoline, fertilizer, cooking-stoves, knives, axes, automobiles, all financed and produced under the imperial scheme; money for mortgages and loans, to placate the sucking tentacle-tip of the money octopus flung far to seize him; money for taxes to run schools on the new model furnished by the Northeast—and, yes, indirectly to swell the endowment of Teachers College of Columbia University and keep its well-marshalled hosts employed; money for more taxes for still more public improvements—new roads, new courthouses (with *steel* filing cabinets), and new bureaus upon bureaus; money for interest on the national debt, covered by bonds gilt-edged, good as gold, offering Hamiltonian conveniences to banks and security-

venders; money for the new Northeastern idea of insurance, to hedge him against the liabilities and calamities forced upon him by the system and to bury him when, lifeless, moneyless, and propertyless, he delivers his soul to his Maker and his body to a mortician who is one of the highly valued members of the Chamber of Commerce. For all the while prodigious and faithful though his labor might have been, the money for these things came to him in a niggardly trickle, if at all, but it poured Northeast in flood. The South has learned this lesson well. And now the West may learn it, too—may know that the West goes in shoddy that the Northeast may walk in silk and satin.[1]

The colonialized regions, thus threatened with exploitation to the point of exhaustion, have tried to meet the danger in two ways. First, they have recapitulated to a certain extent the history of all colonies that begin as dependents furnishing raw materials and wind up with producing establishments and even financial centers of their own. All the regions have moved toward this kind of self-sufficiency. But they still find themselves paying a good deal of tribute to centralized monopoly, and they also find that this kind of self-sufficiency brings evils of its own. Second, they have made a political fight where they could, especially on such issues as silver, the tariff, currency inflation, and taxation.

Both methods are a kind of civil warfare among regions.

[1] The extent to which both West and South are owned, controlled, and exploited by the Northeast is set forth in detail by Walter Prescott Webb in *Divided We Stand,* which was published late in 1937 after this book went to press. The "North," Webb says—implying the Northeast plus the "border states" of the Middle West—owns or controls about $80 out of every $100 in the nation. The West and the South, in Webb's picture, are little more than the hired hands of the dominant section, which maintains control through government-protected corporations, the tariff, patent monopolies, and the credit system.

Both, as the Northeast well recognizes, are dangerous to Northeastern power. At the moment they seem to be more dangerous than at any time since 1860. The Northeast now faces the ultimate consequences of its imperial exploitation of the "greatest free trade area in the world." Regional imperialism is about to be met by regional imperialism, with the South and West combining against the Northeast and attempting, by the Jacksonian strategy, while holding their own ranks intact, to divide the Northeast against itself so as to annex the "doubtful" states. This is clearly foreshadowed in some measures of the Roosevelt administration: the AAA, the Farm Tenant Bill and the cotton-control bill, the banking legislation, the devaluation of the dollar, the SEC, the TVA. The tendency is also indicated in the pressure of "share the wealth" schemes and in the intransigeance of the silver and inflation blocs.

If a South-and-West victory should start another cycle of regional imperialism, the results for the Northeast would be severe, but they would represent, in the eyes of the victors, a restoration of justice. The Northeast would be shorn of much of its power—much, but hardly enough, I imagine, to justify the fear of Christian Gauss of Princeton that Rooseveltian economic nationalism will ruin the great cities of the Eastern seaboard; or to fulfill the prophecy of the Confederate poet, Henry Timrod, who foresaw in 1862 a doom preparing for such cities—

> There, where some rotting ships and crumbling quays
> Shall one day mark the port which ruled the Western seas.

And, though no man would be so rash as Timrod now, it is not stretching possibility far to view the situation of the Northeast as like that of the South in 1860. Although the Northeast should vote unanimously against the hostile combination, it might still find itself in a minority, able to protest,

but otherwise without recourse. If that should happen, will the Northeast sit still and suffer?

But that is precisely the kind of situation that advocates of regionalism are anxious to forestall. The problem lies here. The vicious element is not regionalism but regional imperialism. Regionalists would seek to eliminate the possibility of regional imperialism in any quarter by correcting the form of our governing instruments, so as to adapt them to reality. If regional injustice should occur, they are loath to see the offended region left without recourse. If they can help it, they will not permit what Calhoun called the tyranny of the majority.

It is now in order to review some of the suggestions that have been made for attending to the regional complications of our national situation. These suggestions fall into two main groups: (1) those made by persons who have given up hope of democratic solutions and are interested in a strictly functional economic and social order; and (2) the suggestions of those who, still believing in the possibilities of democracy, would adapt the present forms of government to regional ends.

The Functionalist of the extreme school would bring all regionalisms rudely to heel with the lash of a dictatorial whip. Inevitably, he is an advocate of a planned economy if not of a planned society, and therefore is strongly socialistic, is likely to be Communist, or wants some other powerful kind of collectivism. Always he professes ardent belief in regionalism, but upon examination turns out to be interested only in bringing about a perfectly neat and scientific adaptation of function to environment within a closed and regimented national economy. For the loose political groupings here called regions—more properly called sections by Turner—he has little use, since he often does not know history and never respects it, and has no zest for traditions and cultures with their quite imponderable values. His principle of regional

division would work on a basis of pure economic determinism. He would dissolve all old political boundaries, if necessary, to secure efficient production units within areas adapted to management by collectivized agencies—or corporate ones.

Under a Functional regionalism, the growing of cotton would be permitted only in regions like Texas and the Delta of Mississippi, which are suited to mechanical, large-scale cultivation. Vermont farmers might be allowed to continue their production of maple sugar, hay, and milk, but would not be allowed to raise hogs, since Vermont is not a corn region and hogs are most efficiently raised in close proximity to corn. All cotton mills would be moved South, near the cotton, and all woolen mills would be placed in scientific relation to sheep, say, near Western sheep ranches. Mining regions would mine, but could never raise sheep on the side. Regions would thus specialize far more than they do now, but they would not be at liberty to choose their specialties or to deviate from them. The Planning Commission would regulate all.

Such a regionalism is not American. It belongs to Russia and other home-lands of the totalitarian state. If American institutions should collapse, it might be enforced upon us. Yet even then it could hardly hope to succeed. It contradicts the prime force that has made the regions—their tendency, over and above economic specializations, to become autonomous units possessing whole cultures of their own, which often embody choices not economic at all.

There is a milder Functionalism which occupies a middle ground between collectivist regionalism and the regionalism which links up with a revived Federalism. Regionalists of this school hold that planning can be made to serve democratic purposes. The compromise that they would effect is well illustrated in a Rooseveltian experiment which has many contradictory features: the TVA.

The Tennessee Valley adventure in "regional planning" is a hybrid creation. Born by Federal enactment and therefore an agent of the Federal government, it is nevertheless a "corporation," operating within a physiographic, functional region that overlaps several political and so-called sovereign states; but it is not subject to direction by any or all of those states and has not always been hospitable to their influence and informal interest. The states concerned (that is, nearly all the western South) can exert control only by indirect partisan pressure or through the roundabout method of Congressional legislation. Under a true Federalism, the TVA would be administered, with the aid and support of the Federal government, by the region concerned. It would then escape the criticism it now receives from regions less favored by the Federal government and from states which must impotently watch the manipulation of their resources and population by a paternal and "foreign" agency. As it stands, the TVA, even to its friends, sometimes looks like an irresponsible projection of a planned, functional society into the midst of one of the most thoroughly democratic parts of the United States. It does not guide us very far in our search for the right kind of regionalism. Like some other devices of the Roosevelt administration, it suggests an unwillingness to discover the foundation upon which building may be permanent. Whether its design represents ignorance of American law, history, and circumstance, combined with wishful yearning toward a planned society, or a well-intentioned compromise between collectivism and democracy, I do not know. At any rate, it now injures its own usefulness to a considerable degree by holding out promises that may not be possible of fulfillment.

When we come to democratic suggestions, we see at once that they divide into two groups: those that may be undertaken within the present framework of the Constitution, and

those that require amendment or even sweeping revision of the constitutional fabric.

Under the first head come interstate compacts, of which seventy have already been approved by Congress. Such compacts have been the subject of elaborate study by political scientists. They seem to be useful in special instances, as in the establishment of the Port of New York Authority. They do not help the general problem of the relation between regions and nation, since they touch only local issues and are likely, on account of the difficulty of reaching agreement, to be attempted only under specially favorable circumstances.

A realignment or coalescence of states into regional groups seems legally possible under Article IV, Section 3, of the Constitution, which, though negatively worded, allows "states" to be formed "by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States," if their legislatures and Congress consent. Yet such coalescence, even if consented to by legislatures willing to vote themselves out of existence, would be nothing more than the substitution of a larger territorial state for several smaller ones. Unless accompanied by changes in representation to compensate for the loss of power in the Senate, this device would not fit regional needs. Besides, coalescence is unlikely. States have split; they have never joined.

A third possibility is in Federal administration itself. The Federal Reserve System, the decentralization of bureaus, the proposal to establish "little capitals" are all of this order. Such steps, though symptomatic of the unwieldiness of our Federal government and its lack of regional foothold, must be put down as largely improvements in the sheer efficiency of the Federal mechanism. They could easily be turned to make centralization more effective than it is. In the hands of regional imperialism they would be powerful weapons.

There remain the suggestions for regional reform which imply constitutional alterations. Here at last we arrive on

the ground of a New Federalism. The Old Federalism, with its outright prohibitions against treaties, alliances, and confederations among the several states, and its rigidity in other respects, neither safeguards us against regional imperialism, nor cherishes regional autonomy, nor allows for any change except it be made by constitutional amendment. No means, therefore, is left but to operate upon the historic document itself.

From many quarters have come suggestions for the establishment of regional governments, either to replace the states as seats of local government or to intervene between the states and the Federal government. Most of the authors of these suggestions, while enthusiastic enough in drawing the outlines of the regional map, are not very specific in indicating how the reform is to be achieved; and, still worse, they generally fail to accompany their studies with any philosophy of the relation between Federalism and regionalism. Since they rarely go beyond suggesting constitutional amendment as the means of reform, they cannot be blamed for a certain vagueness. A constitutional amendment to cover the situation would have to embody details and complications to an extent unknown in our experience. For that reason if for no other it could be drawn up only with the greatest difficulty, and would be ratified with even greater difficulty.

In his recent book, *The Need for Constitutional Reform,* Mr. W. Y. Elliott puts the situation in a very different light. He advocates a system of regional commonwealths to replace the states as members of the Federal organism. His map of regional divisions, while retaining as entities a few states, like New York, that are deemed already regions in themselves, would otherwise fix upon groups of states that have natural affiliations: New England, the South Atlantic seaboard, the lower Mississippi Valley, the Pacific Coast, and so on—with, it should be noted, a leaning toward small, economically re-

lated groupings, rather than toward large sections like the Old South.

These regional commonwealths would have unicameral legislatures of their own. The states within them would drop to the condition of administrative units, remaining, like the English counties, "rich depositories of historical associations." Like the provinces of Canada, the regional commonwealths would be charged with the execution of Federal laws. They would be represented in a national House of Representatives on the basis of population.

This precise and statesmanlike outline differs from most other schemes in making the erection of regional commonwealths only one feature, if a necessary and integral feature, of a general process of constitutional reform, the object of which is to secure a genuine Federalism. This reform, undertaken in the spirit of Madison and the Fathers, is to affect all departments. The President is to be made stronger and more responsible, with power to dissolve Congress during his term and make it stand an election. The composition of the Senate is to be changed; some of its power is to be taken away, and it is to be returned to the status originally intended for it, as "a body of elder statesmen," who will revise and supervise, not direct. The power of the Federal Judiciary to control "social policy" will be taken away. The Civil Service will be reorganized along British lines. The whole Federal government, in fact, will have a British shape.

Such drastic revisions, of course, would require nothing less than a constitutional convention. But if Caesarism is to be checked, Mr. Elliott thinks a convention an early necessity. The true enemies of the Constitution, he thinks, are its "stand-pat friends." The true friends are those who would save it from destruction by the Caesars or the Lenins by revision before it is too late.

Whatever else may be said of this bold and well-argued

proposal, there is no doubt that it quickens our minds, as other schemes do not, with a sense of possible and statesman-like achievement rather than dulls us with a cynical yielding to the grind of abstract force and blind accident. If the Constitution is to be rewritten, the drafting must be done by men who, like the Fathers of the original Constitution, believe in the power of humanity over circumstance, and can bring to the task of constitution-making something more than the statistical and technical knowledge of the modern expert, and a great deal more than the sleek political knowingness which is the average American politician's substitute for statesmanship. The task requires men who are, as Madison and his colleagues were, at once lawyers, philosophers, students of history, men of letters, and men of the world, and who have the "feel" of the American situation as well as acquaintance with theory. The spirit, if not the letter, of Mr. Elliott's plan would indicate that he is of such a company; and if there are enough determined souls of the same fibre in America, even though they be few in comparison with politicians and lobbyists, they *can* attempt the task of constitution-making, and it is their sacred duty to contend for the privilege and right of doing so.

Nevertheless, attractive as Mr. Elliott's plan is, the description I have given of the course of regional imperialism indicates its defects. As one reads, he suspects that Mr. Elliott is less interested in regionalism *per se* than in remedying weaknesses in the national government. He wants a *strong* national government, of a British rather than an American model, provided it is also a responsible one, as the present one is not, and he concedes regional commonwealths as a better basic unit than states. If we can get regional reform in no other way, we might be willing to let it come in Mr. Elliott's way. But under this strong government, however responsible, what would prevent the old regional combinations

from being made once more? What would forestall a renewed growth of regional imperialism and its use of the Federal power, now made stronger than ever, to handicap or crush a dissenting region, left in a solid minority as the South long has been—as the Northeast may now conceivably be left?

Mr. Elliott's plan offers no safeguard against such an event. He hardly does more than recognize the problem with a single, casual, passing phrase about "sectional compromise." With his eye fearfully alert against possibilities of Caesarism in the form of personal or corporate dictatorship, he still forgets the other possibility—equally ruinous to true Federalism—that a region, behind a Federal mask, may also play the role of Caesar.

If regional commonwealths are to serve as the basis of a new Federalism, then we must provide against that contingency. And if a constitutional convention is in order, then the task of devising the right safeguard would be a very proper task for it to undertake—perhaps, ultimately, the most important task of all, since on its successful accomplishment might hang the decision as to whether the United States will fly apart in angry contest or be bound under the levelling and militant Caesarism that Mr. Elliott fears or, escaping these disasters, achieve the kind of national union which, if not more perfect, still suits American traditions and realities.

It would be immodest for a layman to make the positive suggestions that ought to come from the trained student of government. The layman cannot do much more than show what is to be safeguarded, and against what.

The regions need a safeguard against imperialism at two points: first in their economic pursuits, since on these they depend for the security which, in Mr. Elliott's opinion, Americans now desire more passionately than equality; and second, in their cultural and social institutions, which, in the South especially, have suffered from outside domination.

The "greatest free trade area in the world" needs not only to be "decentralized" (for decentralization alone is not enough) but also subdivided in the interest of regional reciprocity. There must be boundaries which the exploiting agents will pass only under difficulty and not without penalty if they come on missions of exploitation. Under the letter of the present Federal law no discrimination is supposed to occur; but the existence of regions with diverse cultures actually gives full legal standing to the enormous advantage, amounting to a right of conquest, which an imperializing region holds over the others. We need a lawful means of abolishing this covert discrimination. Perhaps it can be devised only by making it lawful for regions openly to discriminate where just cause appears. To distribute a Federal bounty, subtracted from prosperous regions for the benefit of the disadvantaged, is probably not a fair, adequate, or permanently workable method. The suggestion of Mr. Frank L. Owsley, in "The Pillars of Agrarianism," that "the several regions should have an equal share in the making of the tariff, which would be in the form of a treaty or agreement between all the sections, somewhat in the fashion of the late Austro-Hungarian tariff treaties" represents the kind of privilege that the regions desperately need. More than that, it comes closer than any other suggestion I have seen to indicating the structural principle of a really national policy in such matters as the tariff.

Mr. Owsley does not ask for "inter-regional tariffs," except in the sense that, "if the South should have a lower tariff than the other regions, goods imported through the South would have to pay an extra duty on entering the other regions operating under the treaty."[1]

[1] Webb, in *Divided We Stand,* seems to think internal tariffs worth serious consideration as a means of protecting the South and the West. He also favors repeal of the portion of the Fourteenth Amendment "which has led to the definition of a corporation as a person."

But what if more safeguard is needed? The means of full protection lies perhaps—the layman can venture only a *perhaps*—in giving the regional commonwealths power to tax the agencies that would despoil them. Power to tax or at least to regulate "foreign" capital and enterprises that attempt national monopoly; power, it may be, to control to some degree credit and money; power to safeguard educational systems against the rule of external interests and of propaganda aimed at the very life of regional cultures; power for the South to preserve its bi-racial social system without the furtive evasion or raw violence to which it is now driven when sniped at with weapons of Federal legality; power for the Far West and the Southwest to do likewise with their own race problems; power for the Middle West and the Deep South to curtail or prevent the absentee ownership of their farm lands by Wall Street speculators or by their own expatriates, retired to the luxury of Pasadena and Los Angeles; and power for the Northeast to protect its union labor against Southern cheap labor.

For there must be full reciprocity, and powers allowed to one region must be allowed to all. *That* point must be clear. The man is no patriot who would regard such measures as retaliatory—who would want to see the Northeast crushed and penalized, like the South seventy years ago, and left an impotent and uncontributing part of the nation. In the attempt to right the balance we should not end by upsetting it, and, recalling Burke's great saying about not drawing an indictment against a whole people, we should remember gallantries and beneficences as well as errors. Yet the Northeast should do well to realize that there are people with a burning sense of wrong who wish retaliation, and would inflict it if the turn of events under the Old Federalism should permit—yes, and would cheerfully take the risk of any injurious recoil upon themselves.

If power to tax and regulate is too dangerous a power for

regional governments to possess, then what other measure, guaranteed not to do harm, is available? Shall the regional commonwealths be given a veto power in certain instances, some modern equivalent of Calhoun's principle of nullification? That is worth considering. But at any rate, devices and powers of the kind enumerated, added to the New Federalism described by Mr. Elliott, would give our political institutions an organic relation to our national life. Yet who, whether layman or expert, seeing how event follows upon event, upsetting calculation, will refuse to admit that his gravest calculations will not look ridiculous next month, or next year? Knowing this, the provident calculator is tempted to label his suggestion as the railroad labels its train schedules: *Subject to change without notice!*

But though the suggestion may change, the analysis of the situation will not change very soon, for the conditions described are too deeply rooted in American life to be altered with every passing circumstance. And the suggestions given, though speculative as to details, are firm enough in purpose and certain enough in direction to mark a road of exploration.

Beyond all early prospect of change, too, is a principle which may well have the final place in this discussion. If followed out in American life, it would of itself eliminate much of the necessity for new mechanisms of government. It has two parts, which might be thus stated: first, it is the nature of industrial enterprise, corporate monopoly, and high finance to devour, to exploit, to imperialize; and a region which specializes in these functions is by that fact driven to engage in imperial conquest of one sort or another; second, it is the nature of small business, well-distributed property, and an agrarian regime to stay at home and be content with modest returns. The region that specializes in these things, or that balances them with its industry in fair proportions, is a good neighbor, not desiring conquest. Whatever restores small property, fos-

ters agrarianism, and curtails exaggerated industrialism is on the side of regional autonomy. If we had a fair balance of this sort in America, it is possible that the Old Federalism, with very small changes, would suffice our modern purposes.

But, so firmly intrenched is the ancient enemy of all good balance, it is possible that regionalism must be called in as one of the means of dislodging him. If a given region is too hard pressed, if it is denied recourse, if it is irritated by an assumption of superior piety, then regionalists will think of the old watchword, independence. Independence, signifying as it does the end of colonialism, is a sacred word in American history. Among other things, it means that the land and the region belong to the people who dwell there, and that they will be governed only by their own consent.

IMMOVABLE BODIES AND IRRESISTIBLE FORCES

VI. Still Rebels, Still Yankees

At a meeting of Southern writers in Charleston some years ago, Laurence Stallings looked belligerently around him and expressed an ardent preference for a "Balkanized America." "What I like about Charleston," he said, "is that it has resisted Abraham Lincoln's attempts to put the country into Arrow Collars. If the South had won the war, the country would have had lots more color."

The rebelliousness of Mr. Stallings need not compel us to suspect him of being an unreconstructed Southerner disguised as a man of letters, who is looking for artistic reasons to justify what arms and politics once failed to secure. Discontent with the uniformity of America is common enough; what is not common is the knowledge that this uniformity, a byword ever since James Bryce looked at the American commonwealth through the spectacles of the Gilded Age, is more a myth than a reality.

As a myth, it probably represents the wishful thinking of those who, for their own designs, want America to become uniform. Actually America is not yet uniform; very likely it is less uniform than it once was and far more Balkanized than Mr. Stallings dreams. The unreconstructed Southerners have done their part in keeping it Balkan; but there are unreconstructed Yankees, too, and other unreconstructed Americans of all imaginable sorts, everywhere engaged in preserving their local originality and independence.

The only people who do not know this are certain experts who do most of the current talking about American society. They live in a sociological pickle of statistics and progress. They are eternally looking for what they call "social values," but they strangely confine their research to libraries and graduate "projects" at the larger universities. They avoid the places where social values may be encountered in the flesh. If they stumble upon a living social value, walking visibly about some spot of earth and drawing its nutriment from a tradition embodied in the houses, speech, crafts, music, folklore, and wisdom of an actual people, their rule is to denounce it as an anachronism and to call for its extermination. For them, nothing must grow according to its nature, but things "develop" by laboratory formulae, which are obtained by inspecting the reactions of the most abnormal and depressed specimens of humankind, too weak to protest against sociological vivisection.

Those of us who still believe in the map of the United States know that it marks the residence of some diverse Americans who had better not go unacknowledged. In Vermont, for instance, are people who are still Yankees; and in Georgia, and elsewhere, there are still Rebels. I remember talking with a certain Virginian who watched a Vermont sunset with me, one summer evening. As the sun passed below the distant Adirondacks, we looked at the Green Mountains around us, and at the trim Vermont fields where all the weeds were flowers and all the grass was hay. In the clear detail of the afterglow we saw the forests of spruce and balsam and maple, and spoke of how the very wilderness, in this New England State, had uprightness and order. The woods were as snug and precise as a Yankee kitchen—no ragged edges, no sprawling, nothing out of place. In the clearings the farm-houses were all painted; and the barns were painted, too. The streams were orthodox streams, almost model streams, with water

always translucent and stones rounded and picturesquely placed among moss and ferns. They were often called "brooks"—a word that for Southerners existed only on the printed page.

On this land, the Virginian said, the Yankees had looked so intimately and long that, like the man in Hawthorne's story of the Great Stone Face, they had become the image of what they contemplated. The Yankee genius of Vermont was upright, vertical, and no doubt Puritan. Where the landscape itself enforced consistency and order, how could the people concede much virtue to inconsistency and irregularity? The forebears of the Vermont Yankee had once failed to understand how Southerners could be devoted both to slavery *and* democracy. That old failure of understanding did not seem queer, or worth more than a passing sigh, to two Southerners who stood looking at sunset upon a land whose gentled wildness suggested the urgent possibility of a well-ordered universe, cut to a discreet Yankee pattern. But the human geography of America had now become a particolored thing, sprawling cross the continent in a crazy-quilt of provinces, or sections, each with its private notion of a universe. No longer, as in the sixties, could the Yankee make bold to set up a general pattern for the entire Union. He had enough to do if he would defend and preserve what was peculiarly his own —his very own, surely, in upper New England. In such a purpose of preservation the two Southerners at last could make bold to sympathize, even to help if possible. But preservation could not be achieved without recognizing a principle of diversity in American life. Only by such means could one make any sense out of Lamar's famous epigram in his eulogy on Sumner, "My countrymen, know one another and you will love one another"; it ceased to have meaning if America was to be subjugated to the ideal of uniformity, or to the ideal universe that some one section might generate.

But how could the principle of diversity be inculcated? On the negative side, certain false images, the product of legend or propaganda, must somehow be counterbalanced. Regrettably enough, some of the fairest legends caused the greatest embarrassment. To the Virginian I recalled the horror of a good lady from the Middle West, who was motoring from Washington to Richmond. Mount Vernon was all right, she thought; there the legend was safely frozen. But beyond, on the road to Richmond, what had become of all the great mansions she had read about, the cotton fields with Negroes carolling, the old gentlemen in goatees and white vests, sipping mint juleps in the shade? They were not visible. There were only a few scattered shacks and tumbledown barns in miles of impenetrable wilderness that looked for all the world as it must have looked when John Smith first invaded it. If she could have encountered the legend, the lady would have been content. But not seeing it or knowing how to locate it, she was smitten with a housewifely desire to get at this ragged land with a good broom and whisk it into seemliness.

Other sojourners had been anxious to do a far more drastic tidying-up. The Harlan County visitors, the Scottsboro attorneys, the shock troops of Dayton and Gastonia asked no questions about the genius of place. Wherever they went on their missions of social justice, they carried with them a legend of the future, more dangerously abstract than the legend of the past, and sternly demanded that the local arrangements be made to correspond with it, at whatever cost. The local arrangements, indeed, might well bear some mending. And yet the only America that the visitors offered as a model was an overgrown urban America, forever in process of becoming one laboratory experiment after another.

What could be done about all this? Our answers were shrouded in darkness as we walked back to the log fires and good company of a New England inn. The Virginian, after

the fashion of good Southerners who do not want to let anybody know the incertainty of their minds under modern conditions, did not propose any answer. Instead, he told several good stories. They were his courteous and delightful way of saying that he was being pounded between his own unyielding loyalty and the howling respectability of the great world.

If any answer is to be found, if anything positive is to be done, it must surely be through a laborious process of discovering America all over again. When one looks at America, not to see how it does or does not fit the synthetic ideals proposed for its future, but only with the modest purpose of detecting the realities—let us say the social values—that persist in local habitations, he soon realizes that comparisons are more fruitful than condemnations. More specifically, when one has the good fortune to go directly from a summer in Vermont to an autumn and winter in Middle Georgia, he forms a clear picture of sectional differences. This picture is not in the least favorable to the notion that the diverse America of the Rebels and Yankees is in any immediate danger of being submerged.

If on coming to Vermont I had consulted the modern legend of New England that vaguely haunted my mind, I would have received the iconoclastic shock which our advanced thinkers argue is the first step toward salvation. Had not a New England migrant to the South assured me that his ancestral acres were now inhabited by Montenegrins, who had turned them into a goat farm? Had not the sepulchral Eugene O'Neill and others told tales of the poverty and decadence of New England life? The farms were deserted, it was said; the immigrants and mill-towns had come; the Yankees had left for parts unknown, or, remaining, had become degenerate. Even the loyalty of Robert Frost gave no comfortable assurance, if one accepted the New York alec's criticism of *North of*

Boston; though there were many wistful asides in which Frost put forth the guarded wisdom of a not yet daunted soul. The New England of Whittier and Webster was supposed to be extinct; it had been replaced by Puritan-baiters and F. Scott Fitzgeraldites who drank cocktails and read Proust when not conducting the insurance business of the United States.

But if the Vermont that I saw was in the least representative of New England, this composite picture was a wild detraction. In Vermont, if nowhere else, a New England like that of Whittier and Webster miraculously persisted, a reality capable of reducing a Southerner almost to despairing envy. I could understand what led Walter Hines Page, a quarter of a century ago, to disparage his native North Carolina and fall in love with New England. But the time was past when one needed to disparage or praise in the interest of the America Page dreamed about, for in the nineteen-thirties it seemed impossible of realization, or, where realized, already past saving. To one who did not accept Lincoln's quaint idea that the United States must become "all one thing or all the other," it seemed more than ever true that the unity of America must rest, first of all, on a decent respect for sectional differences.

If Vermont and Georgia could be taken in a broad way to stand for New England and the Deep South, one could easily trace out the most general differences. The Vermont towns, like the Vermont landscape, were swept and garnished, as if the Day of Judgment might at any moment summon them into the presence of the celestial inspector. They looked as if Vermonters lived by the adage "Handsome is as handsome does," and one could reflect that this proverb might well have issued from some collaborative effort of Poor Richard and Jonathan Edwards. The most delightful of Southern towns was almost certain to mix a little squalor with its grandeurs. Here, what a Southerner most particularly noticed, was the

neatly painted aspect of everything, the absence of ramshackle buildings and litter, the white steeples of churches, the ship-shapeness of streets, yards, garages, barber shops, and public buildings. By some special benison of God and the New England conscience, not a billboard had been allowed to sprout between Bennington and the Canadian border. Perhaps by the same double grace, not a weed sprouted, either. All the weeds had turned into ferns and buttercups. Vermont farms were Currier and Ives prints of what good farms ought to look like, with orchards and brooks in exactly the right place and gates that did not need mending. In the background were lakes and mountains where one would put them if he were Aladdin or Wordsworth. It was not surprising to be told that hardly a poison snake, and no poison ivy, existed in the State of Vermont; or to find that there were excellent trails running the whole length of the Green Mountains, with finger-posts at every wilderness cross-roads, and tin huts, with beds, firewood, and caretaker, atop of the highest peak. A few nagging irregularities of nature, like blackflies and mosquitoes, seemed really blasphemous in a land to which God had given a monopoly of all things good and precise. No wonder, with all this beneficence around them, that the Yankees remembered the Mayflower and forgot John Smith, honored Bunker Hill and neglected King's Mountain. If they could claim such priority in the benevolence of God, their proprietary feeling toward the Revolutionary War, and their almost hereditary claim to the direction of the United States government were by comparison insignificant appurtenances, theirs as a matter of course and by general presumption.

Although I did not hold very devotedly to the economic determinism of modern historians, it was a temptation to say that the people were a great deal like the land. There was the climate, which put keenness into a Southerner's veins. Summer was short, and one had to make the most of it; winter

was severe, and one had to keep shield and buckler perpetually ready against it—in that matter was God benevolent or ruthless? Short summers and cold winters made the Vermont Yankee frugal and careful. He must watch his corners. If he were caught napping, he would perish. So much and no more was the gift of his seasons; so much and no more was the rule of his nature. And one had to watch over his neighbor as well as work with him if the general security were not to be imperilled by some outrageous letting down of bars. Very likely, the New England civic conscience derived as much from the imperatives of climate as from the Puritan tradition; the one egged on the other.

No great check had ever been put upon the development of qualities that the Southerners recognized as ineradicably Yankee. History had been as kind to the Yankee as God had been kind. Since Revolutionary times no great sudden change had ever swept over these peaceful towns and this quiet landscape. Industrialism had come slowly and somewhat agreeably upon a people who had the ingenuity to use it and the moral force to make it behave. How could they who thought they knew how to tame the monster realize that he might walk unshackled and ravening elsewhere? The Yankees, indeed, had never tasted defeat. Since Burgoyne's expedition no invader had come upon them to ravage and destroy. They had freed the Negroes, replying "I can" to duty's "Thou must"; but they were fortunately exempt from the results of emancipation, for no Negroes lived among them to acquaint them with the disorder of unashamed and happy dirt. One knew that a slum in New England would be a well-managed slum, and that New Englanders would comprehend Secretary Perkins's horror at the lack of plumbing in unreformed America and her notion of saving the barefoot South by building shoe factories. For in New England humanitarianism was the natural flower of good sense. In a land where

everything was so right, it was hard to imagine a perverse land where so much could be so wrong without disturbing either a people's composure or their happiness.

But in the plantation country of Middle Georgia the social values required a different yardstick. The genius of Georgia was stretched out, relaxed and easy, in keeping with the landscape, which required a large and horizontal view of mundane affairs. The Georgian assumed that God would have sense and heart enough to take into consideration, when Judgment Day came around, a good deal besides external and man-made appearances. God was a gentleman, indeed, who would certainly know, without being told, that one was a person, a somebody, doing his best among some rather amazing arrangements that had better not be talked about too much. The climate might or might not predispose the Georgia Rebel to laziness; the fact was, he worked and fretted more than the Yankee knew. But the Rebel idea was never to *seem* to work and fret. You must not let your work ride you, was the saying. In plain truth, you did not need to. The land was bountiful, and the Lord would provide, and in event of the Lord's failure or displeasure, you could always fall back on your kinfolks.

Where the seasons were all mixed up, so that autumn merged into spring without any sharp demarcation, and you might have a dubious summer in the middle of winter, it became almost a point of honor not to worry too much about provision. There was no need to watch corners when something was growing all the time. Almost anything would grow in Middle Georgia, and almost everything did grow, including weeds whose invasions could not possibly be repelled from every roadside and ditch if they were to be kept out of cotton and corn.

The Georgia landscape had a serene repose that lulled a man out of all need of conscience. It was anything but swept

and garnished. It could be mild or majestic or genial and savage depending on what view you got of pines against red earth, or Negro cabins underneath their chinaberry trees, or sedge grass running into gullies and thence to impenetrable swamps, or deserted mansions lost in oak groves and magnolias. Rivers were muddy and at times unrestrained; they got out of bounds, as all things natural did here. In the pine barrens you might get an impression of desolation and melancholy; but things could grow lushly too, with the overpowering vegetable passion that harrowed the Puritan soul of Amy Lowell, when she visited the Magnolia Gardens at Charleston. But finally, it was a well-tilled country, where you were forever seeing the Negro and his mule against the far horizon, or the peach orchards bursting into an intoxicating pink.

The seasons were full of charms and intimidations. Spring, with its dogwood blossoms and soft airs, might deliver a tornado or a flood; summer, full of grown corn and harvest ease, might turn into dusty drouth. The woods that lured you to enter and gave nuts and flowers for the taking were full of hidden terrors. Sit on a mossy bank without precaution, and in a few hours you might be on fire with chigoe bites. Stoop to pick a flower, and you might find a rattlesnake. Indoors the housewife had to fight cockroaches and flies; outdoors were hawks, polecats, weasels, 'possums, coons, and other varmints to harry the henhouse. Precision, for the Georgian, must rank among the Utopian virtues. If New England encouraged man to believe in an ordered universe, Georgia—and a good deal of the South besides—compelled him to remember that there were snakes in Eden. Nature, so ingratiating and beautiful, which bound the Georgian to his land with a love both possessive and fearful, was a fair but dreadful mistress, unpredictable and uncontrollable as God. The New Englander knew exactly where to find nature harsh and nature yielding, and he could make his

arrangements accordingly. But the Georgian never knew. His safest policy was to relax, and he readily developed a great degree of tolerance for irregularity in nature and man. At his lowest level, this quality made him lackadaisical and trifling. In this he differed from the New England Yankee, who became a perfectionist, and then at his worst might turn into zealot, strangely intolerant even while, as idealist, he argued for tolerance.

History, like God and nature, had been both generous and unkind to Georgia and the South. The Georgia Rebel must approach his early history through a bloody link of war and reconstruction that was hazy and bygone to the Vermont Yankee. Defeat had possessed him and had rubbed deep into his wounds. Around him were the visible reminders of destruction and humiliation. His land had been ravaged and rebuilt, and he had been told to forget. But he would not and could not forget, and was therefore torn between his loyalty and his awareness that the great world was bored with his not forgetting. He had been rebuked for being inept at administering a newfangled government that he did not understand or like any too well, and in which he had been allowed to participate only by a kind of negligent afterthought. Turning desperately to the industrial civilization against which he had once taken arms, he had played it as a hedge against the problematic future. Though agrarian at heart, he had been forced to wonder whether the ingenious Yankee might not be right after all.

Thus he remembered the faith and hankered after the fleshpots at the same time. But industrialism, declining to be treated as a mere hedge, began Sherman's march to the sea all over again. It piled ugliness upon wreckage and threw the old arrangements out of kilter. The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Kiwanis Club flourished side by side. Mule-wagon and automobile, fundamentalism and lib-

eralism, education and illiteracy, aristocratic pride and backwoods independence disproved the axiom that two bodies cannot occupy the same space. Cities that preserved the finest flavor of the old regime had to be approached over brand-new roads where bill-boards, tourist camps, filling stations, and factories broke out in a modernistic rash among the water oaks and Spanish moss. And everywhere was the Negro, a cheerful grinning barnacle tucked away in all the tender spots of Southern life, not to be removed without pain, not to be cherished without tragedy. The Georgian, when reproached for his intolerance, told himself that actually nobody outdid him in fond tolerance of the Negro. Lynchings, the work of hot-heads and roustabouts, were regrettable; but what did a few lynchings count in the balance against the continual forbearance and solicitude that the Georgian felt he exercised toward these amiable children of cannibals, whose skins by no conceivable act of Congress or educational program could be changed from black to white. The presence of the Negro, which had its advantages in agriculture and domestic service, made the Georgian's life both comfortable and ramshackle; it gave him devoted servants and social problems, cheap labor and hideous slums, an endless flow of folklore and anecdote, and eternal apprehension for the future. But in his own way, the Georgian respected the Negro, as another irregularity, taking a human and personal form, that had somehow to be lived with. He distrusted all ready-made prescriptions for bringing about regularity. In Georgia, life went along horizontally: you never crossed a bridge until you came to it—and maybe not then.

But sociologists not only cross bridges; they build all imaginable kinds of new ones. The picture of America, as sociologically reformed, does not contemplate any great concessions to Yankee uprightness or Rebel relaxation. Indeed,

the sociologist, armed with science, is ready to follow reformation with transformation. In the vast inevitable working of the social forces, sectional differences become irrelevant. With a cold smile the sociologist pronounces a death sentence upon Rebel and Yankee alike. Not that they matter very much—but they will have to yield!

When he talks like this, I am perversely compelled to remember the individuals I have seen, Brother Jonathan of Vermont and Cousin Roderick of Georgia, whom I cannot imagine as yielding to the puny weapons flourished by our social philosophers. They are local incarnations of the Old Adam. They are the immovable bodies that can furnish the irresistible social forces with an incalculable meeting. They are human beings, undebatably alive; and they are different.

Brother Jonathan lives in Yankeetown—for a place-name is often a "town" in New England, and less often a "ville" or a "burg" as in the South. He is a wizened little chip of a man, with blue eyes and a bald head, and he looks frail enough for any northwest wind to blow away. But there is not a wind on this planet strong enough to blow Brother Jonathan off his mountain farm. If any wind contrived to do so, he would climb right back again in the matter-of-fact way that Robert Frost describes in *Brown's Descent*—he would "bow with grace to natural law, And then go round it on his feet."

Brother Jonathan is past seventy years, and his wife Priscilla is well over sixty, but between them they still manage to do most of the daily work, in house and field, for a two-hundred-acre farm, most of which is in woodland and meadow. Nathaniel, their adopted son, helps some now and then; but Nathaniel, who is carpenter, mechanic, cabinet-maker, mountain guide, and tax-collector combined, is busy putting up the new house into which he and Sophronia, his wife, will soon move—they are building it extra large, to take in summer boarders. Sophronia helps Priscilla as much as she can, but

she has her own small children to look after. Later on, Brother Jonathan hopes to get a twelve-year-old boy from the orphanage, who will do the chores for his keep. But now, Brother Jonathan must be up at daylight to start the kitchen fire and milk the cows. If it is haying-time, he is out in the meadow early with the mowing-machine, which he has sharpened and greased with his own hands, or repaired at his own smithy if it needs repairing. The mower bumps and clicks through the rough meadow, tossing the little man to and fro as he warily skirts the outcrops of stone that will have to be circled with a scythe to get the last wisp of hay.

Later, he changes the patient old horses from mower to wagon and starts in with a pitchfork. It is a sight to see him navigating the loaded wagon from the upper field to the barn, past jutting boulders and through deep ruts. But his pace is easy; he keeps it up all day without undue perspiration or agony, and after supper cuts his wood and milks his cows again in unruffled calm. He does not seem tired or bored. As he milks, he philosophizes to the listening stranger. Yes, times are not what they were, but a man can get along if he will be careful and honest. Foolish people, of course, never know how to manage. The harm all comes from people of no character that do things without regard to common decency. The stars are shining when he takes the pails of milk into the kitchen. Under the hanging oil lamp he reads the *Burlington Free Press* or *The Pathfinder* until he begins to nod.

All the arrangements on Brother Jonathan's farm are neat and ingenious—the arrangements of a man who has had to depend largely on his own wits and strength. The barn is cleverly arranged in two stories, with a ramp entering the upper story for the convenience of Brother Jonathan and his hay wagons, and running water on the lower story, for the convenience of the animals. One well, near the barn, is operated by a windmill; it supplies the stock. Another well, higher

up, supplies the house, for Brother Jonathan has a bathroom in the upper hall and faucets in the kitchen. He has no telephone or electric lights. A man can dig and pipe his own wells, and they are finished; but telephone and electric lights, not being home contrivances, require a never-ending tribute to Mammon. He has his own saw-mill and his own work-shop, where he can mend things without losing time and money on a trip to the village. His garage, occupied at present by Nathaniel's four-year-old car (which is not being used!), contains a carpenter's bench and a small gas engine rigged to do sawing and turning. There are pelts drying on the walls.

The house is built to economize space and retain heat. For all its modest proportions, it is convenient and comfortable. The kitchen is spacious and well-equipped. The pantry and cellar are stored with vegetables, fruits, and meats that Priscilla has put up with her own hands. The dining-room, with its long table covered with spotless oil-cloth, is eating-room, living-room, and children's playground combined. Here all gather after supper: the women with their tatting and embroidery; the lively dark-eyed boy from the village, with his home-made fiddle; a summer boarder or two, or a visiting relative; and always Brother Jonathan with his newspaper. In one corner is a reed organ, on which Brother Jonathan occasionally plays hymns. In another corner is a desk, filled with miscellaneous papers, books, and old magazines. On the walls hang a glass frame containing butterflies, the gift of a wandering entomologist; an 1876 engraving of General Washington being welcomed at New York, with the pictures of all the Presidents, up to Hayes, around the border; and a faded photograph of a more youthful Brother Jonathan with his fellow baggage-clerks, taken in the days when he went west and got a job in Chicago. Brother Jonathan talks of Chicago sometimes, but he never reveals why he, unlike many other Yankees, came back to Vermont.

The temper of the household is a subdued and even pleasantness, which the loud alarms and excursions of the world do not penetrate very far. The progress of Nathaniel's new house; the next morning's arrangements for gathering vegetables and canning; what Brother Jonathan shall say in the speech he is to make at the approaching celebration of the Timothys' golden wedding—such topics take precedence over the epic contentions of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt. Priscilla may go so far as to marvel that anybody can doubt the goodness of Mr. Hoover. (She does not add, as she well might, that Mr. Roosevelt, as a "Yorker," inherits the distrust of Vermont.) Or Brother Jonathan may warm up to politics enough to announce his everlasting distrust for liquorish Al Smith and to confess that, out of firm disapproval for vice, he has once or twice bolted the Republican ticket and voted for the Prohibition party's candidate. But in the South, he supposes, he would be as good a Democrat as the next one. They are all curious about the South—about Negroes—and whether the Southern people still have hard feelings against the North (on this point they seem a little anxious and plaintive). But the talk soon shifts to the Green Mountain Boys, from one of whom Brother Jonathan is descended, or to stories of his childhood, when bears were as thick as porcupines are now—he tells of how seven bears were once killed in the same tree. In these stories Brother Jonathan may put in a dry quip or two, by way of garnishment. He has a store of homely jokes and extended metaphors, to which he frequently adds a humorous gloss to be sure the stranger gets the point. Then maybe there is a game of anagrams—or on another evening, a corn-roast, with a few cronies and kinfolks from the village, who talk the clipped Yankee-talk that seems, to Southern ears, as pure an English as can be, with only a little of the twang that dialect stories have taught one to expect.

Brother Jonathan is not dogmatic to the point of testiness,

but he is firmly rationalistic on many points. He declares it incredible, for instance, that Catholics can believe in transubstantiation—how can bread and wine *actually* turn into the blood and body of Jesus Christ? Yet oddly enough, Brother Jonathan is neither Congregationalist nor Unitarian, but Methodist, and does not mind repeating the Apostles' Creed, with its formidable references to the Trinity and the Resurrection. I am led to suspect that it is not the doctrine but the authority to which Brother Jonathan is temperamentally hostile. He is used to depending on himself; he does not like to be told things. And his independence is of a piece with the whole conduct of his life. Years ago, when a famous local character eccentrically bought up all the surrounding woodland and farm land and turned it into a forest reserve which he bequeathed to a neighboring college, Brother Jonathan did not sell out. He held on then, he holds on now, with a possessiveness that would be the despair of Communists. He will continue to hold on, as long as trees yield maple syrup—which he will never, never basely dilute with cane syrup—and boarders return summer after summer.

For Brother Jonathan belongs in spirit to the old republic of independent farmers that Jefferson wanted to see flourish as the foundation of liberty in the United States. To conserve that liberty he has his own Yankee arrangements: the "town," which the Southerner had to learn consisted of a village and a great deal of contiguous territory up to the next "town-line"; and the town meeting, at which Brother Jonathan could stand up and tell the government what he thought about it. Of the uses of town meetings Priscilla has something to say, which comes, I reflect, with a little feminine sauciness. A certain individual, she relates, was criticized for not painting the "community house," as he had been employed to do; and when he excused himself on the ground that paint was lacking, his own wife sprang up in the town meeting and cried:

"Don't believe a word he says. That paint's setting in the cellar this minute!"

But the Southerner could reflect that such family intimacy might have civic advantages. Brother Jonathan's local government is composed of nobody more Olympic or corrupt than his own neighbors and relations. For him it is not something off yonder, and he visualizes the national government (though a little too innocently) as simply an enlarged town meeting, where good management ought to be a matter of course. In Yankeetown, good management is a matter of course: it maintains a library, it looks after roads, it sees that taxes are paid and well spent. If the State government does not behave, Nathaniel himself will run for the legislature and see that it does behave.

In all this there was much for a Southerner to savor curiously and learn about—as he savored and learned about the strange food that appeared on Brother Jonathan's table: doughnuts for breakfast, maple syrup on pie and cereal, the New England boiled dinner, the roasting ears that were really roasted in the old Indian fashion. Just as Brother Jonathan's menu suited the soil and the people, so his tidiness and responsibility suited the unobtrusive integrity of his character. With emphasis, one could say: Vermont is upright, vertical, and, even yet, Puritan—why not?

And almost two thousand miles away, with an unconcern about the state of the world that parallels but differs from Brother Jonathan's, Cousin Roderick of Rebelville is achieving another salvation somehow not recorded in the auguries of socialistic planning. Autumn is beginning, the scuppernongs are ripe, and he invites everybody to come over and join him in the scuppernong arbor. In the late afternoon a merry crew gather around the great vine, laughing and bantering as they pick the luscious grapes and crush them against their palates.

Sister Caroline is there, with a figure as trim and a wit as lively at eighty as it must have been at twenty. Young Cousin Hector and his wife are there—they are "refugeeing" from the industrial calamity that overtook them in a northern city. And there are numerous other vague cousins and sisters and children, all munching and passing family gossip back and forth between bites. Cousin Roderick's own Dionysian laughter goes up heartiest of all among the leaves, as he moves to and fro, rapidly gathering grapes and pressing them upon the visitors. "Oh, you are not going to quit on us," he says. "You must eat more than *that*. Scuppernongs never hurt a soul." The scuppernong vine, he declares, is a hundred years old and nearly always fruitful. But not so old, never so fruitful, puts in Sister Caroline, as the scuppernong vine at the old place, that as barefoot children they used to clamber over.

Then the meeting is adjourned to Cousin's Roderick's great front porch, where one looks out between white columns at sunset clouds piling up into the deep blues and yellows of a Maxfield Parrish sky. Down the long street of Rebelville, between the mighty water oaks set out by Cousin Roderick's kin, after the Confederate War, the cotton wagons are passing, heaped high with the white mass of cotton and a Negro or two atop, and the talk goes on, to the jingle of trace chains and the clop of mule hoofs on the almost brand-new State highway, which is so much better for rubber tires than mule hoofs. Over yonder lives Cousin Roderick's Aunt Cecily, a widow, the single indomitable inhabitant of a stately mansion where economics has not yet prevailed against sentiment. Next door is Uncle Burke Roderick, a Confederate veteran who at ninety still drives his horse and buggy to the plantation each morning; he is the last survivor of three brothers who were named Pitt, Fox, and Burke, after their father's eighteenth-century heroes. All around indeed, are the Roderick kin, for Cousin Roderick, whose mother married a Bertram, bears the

family name of his mother's people, a numerous clan who, by dint of sundry alliances and ancient understandings, attend to whatever little matters need attention in the community affairs of Rebelville, where Jefferson's "least government" principle is a matter of course. Before supper, or after, some of the kinfolks may drop in, for there is always a vast deal of coming and going and dropping in at Cousin Roderick's.

As he takes his ease on the porch, Cousin Roderick looks to be neither the elegant dandy nor the out-at-elbows dribbler of tobacco juice that partisans have accredited to the Southern tradition. He is a fairly tall, vigorous man, plainly dressed, with the ruddiness of Georgia sun and good living on his face. His eyes are a-wrinkle at the corners, ready to catch the humor of whatever is abroad. His hand fumbles his pipe as he tells one anecdote after another in the country drawl that has about as much of Mark Twain and Sut Lovengood in it as it has of the elisions and flattenings supposed to belong to Southern patrician speech. In fact, though he is really patrician (as the female members of his family can assure you) he does not look anything like the Old Colonel of legend, and in spirit he, too, belongs to the Jeffersonian constituency. He has some of the bearing of an English squire, and a good deal of the frontier heartiness that Augustus Baldwin Longstreet depicted in *Georgia Scenes*. He assumes that the world is good-humored and friendly until it proves itself otherwise. If it does prove otherwise, there is a glint in his eye that tells you he will fight.

Cousin Roderick is the opposite of Chaucer's Man of Law, who ever seemed busier than he was. Cousin Roderick is busier than he seems. His air of negligence, like his good humor, is a philosophical defense against the dangerous surprises that life may turn up. Really, he is not negligent. He does not work with his own hands, like Brother Jonathan, or his Southern brothers of upcountry and bluegrass; but in the past he has worked a-plenty with his hands and knows

how it should be done. On his several tracts of land, the gatherings of inheritance and purchase, are some one hundred and fifty Negroes whom he furnishes housing, food, and a little money; they do his labor—men, women, children together—they are his "hands." He is expected to call them by name, to get them out of jail, to doctor them, even sometimes to bury them when "lodge dues" may have lapsed. They are no longer his slaves; but though they do not now utter the word, they do not allow him to forget that he has the obligations of a master.

As Cousin Roderick makes the "rounds" of his fields—no more on horseback, as of old, but in a battered Chevrolet—he sets forth his notions of economy. As for the depression, that is no new thing in Rebelville. People here have got used to ruination. After the Confederate War came Reconstruction; after Reconstruction, Tom Watson and the Populist turmoil of the nineties; a while later, the peach boom, and its collapse; then the Florida boom, with its devastations; and now, this new depression. Like most of his kin, Cousin Roderick has simply retreated into the old plantation economy. He tells how, when he was a young fellow, just beginning to take charge, his father came out to the plantation one day and asked for a ham. Cousin Roderick explained that hogs were up to a good price; he had sold the entire lot, on the hoof, and had good money in the bank. "Sir," said the old man, "let me never again catch you without hams in your smokehouse and corn in your crib. You've got to make this land take care of itself." "And that," says Cousin Roderick, "is what I aim to do." From the land he feeds his own family, the hundred and fifty Negroes, and the stock. Whatever is left, when taxes and upkeep are deducted, is the profit. Anything that grows, he will plant: asparagus, peaches, pecans, onions, peppers, tomatoes, and of course the great staple crops, grain, hay, and cotton. Especially cotton, for no matter how low

the price, cotton is money. It is ridiculous, he thinks, to talk of getting people who are hard-up for money to reduce cotton acreage. For his part, Cousin Roderick intends to make every bale his land will produce. But if cotton fails, he still can sell cattle, or cabbage, or timber from his baronial holdings. Land is the only abiding thing, the only assurance of happiness and comfort. He wants more land, not less.

One suspects that Cousin Roderick, however hard-pressed he may be at the bank, is fundamentally right. If he is not right, how does he manage, in these times, to send a daughter to college, and entertain his friends, and keep a cheerful face before the world? The portraits of his ancestors, looking down from their frames above great-grandfather's sideboard or his wife's new grand piano, eternally assure Cousin Roderick that he is right. They won this Eden of sandy earth and red clay, where all things grow with a vigor that neither winter nor drouth can abate. Not soon, not soon will their son give it up.

To the designs of experts who want to plan people's lives for them, Cousin Roderick gives no more than the indulgent attention of a naturally kind-hearted man. He reads the anxious thunderings of the young men who reproduce, in the *Macon Telegraph,* the remote dynamitical poppings of the *New Republic*, and is unmoved; the young men are like the mockingbird who sat on the cupola of the courthouse while court was in session and so learned to sing: *Prisoner-look-upon-the-jury! Jury-look-upon-the-prisoner!* GUILTY! GUILTY! GUILTY! It is a little incredible that so much planning should need to be done. Don't people know how they want to live? As for politics, long since it became tawdry and uncertain. Politics is for lawyers. Cousin Roderick would no more think of running for the legislature than he would think of moving to China. In that, perhaps, he lamentably differs from his ancestors. But in Rebelville political action is generally no more than a confirmation of what has been talked

around among the clans. If you really want things done, you speak quietly to Cousin So-and-So and others that pass the word to everybody that counts. And then something is done.

In Rebelville the politics and economics of the bustling world become a faint whisper. All that matters is to see one's friends and relatives and pass from house to house, from field to field, under Georgia skies; to gather at a simple family dinner where only three kinds of bread and four kinds of meat are flanked by collards, sweet potatoes, corn, pickles, fruits, salads, jams, and cakes; or at a barbecue for fifty or more, for which whole animals are slaughtered and, it would seem, entire pantries and gardens desolated; or to sit with the wise men in front of the store, swapping jokes and telling tales hour after hour; or to hunt for fox, 'possum, coon, and quail, in swamp and field; or (for the ladies) to attend meetings of U. D. C.'s, D. A. R.'s, and Missionary Societies; or church service, or district conference or the tender ceremonies of Confederate Memorial Day, or the high-school entertainment; or to hear the voices of Negroes, sifting through the dusk, or the mockingbird in moonlight; or to see the dark pines against sunset, and the old house lifting its columns far away, calling the wanderer home. The scuppernongs are gone, and cotton is picked. But already the pecans are falling. And planting begins again while late roses and chrysanthemums are showing, and, even in the first frosts, the camellias are budding, against their December flowering. What though newspapers be loud, and wars and rumors threaten—it is only an academic buzzing, that one must yet tolerate for manners' sake. Sowing and harvest go together, and summer runs into winter, and in Georgia one is persuaded to take the horizontal view.

By some it may be said that dark clouds hang over Yankeetown and Rebelville—and clouds of menace, maybe of destruction. I do not deny their presence, but my story is not

of such clouds. In this strange modern world it may be observed that men talk continually of the good life without producing a specimen of it, to convince an inquirer. Brother Jonathan and Cousin Roderick do not talk about the good life. They lead it. If government is intended to serve human interests, what does it propose to do about them? If science is really intelligent, what does it mean by conniving to put a stigma upon them or to destroy them? I cannot believe that a government or a science which ignores or depreciates them is very trustworthy. I believe that government and science will fail unless they are taken into account. They, and others, are the incarnations of the principle of diversity through which the United States have become something better than Balkan, and without which the phrase "my country" is but a sorry and almost meaningless abstraction.

VII. New York and the Hinterland

In the loud nineteen-twenties, when a Younger Generation could still hope to save the nation by disillusioning it, hardly anything American seemed destined to escape the scorn of the debunkers. A backward look, however, reveals a principle of selection that in former days was less apparent. Upon the Eastern metropolitan regions to which the Young Intellectuals were fleeing, the blows fell lightly and good-humoredly when they fell at all; this region, with Europe beyond, was their refuge. Regions of the South Atlantic Coast, though in the past they had greatly offended, were treated with some indulgence. Cities like Baltimore and Charleston, even parts of Virginia and North Carolina, were spared rough treatment; they were conceded a lingering modicum of civilization. But upon a region that came to be known as the hinterland, lying vaguely somewhere to the west and south, the blows fell ceaselessly, without quarter to persons, institutions, or localities.

Innocent of history as they were, the young scorners—many of whom were actually on the ragged edge of middle age—could hardly have been expected to know that their lament was so familiar in American annals as to be antique. The hinterland about which they complained was the Old West that long before this had annoyed the dynasties of Virginia and Massachusetts: it began then, as in the nineteen-twenties, with Kentucky and Tennessee, and extended through

the enormous regions south and west to Texas and the Great Plains; and it covered the country north of the Ohio River and westward, athwart the upper reaches of the Mississippi Valley. The complaint of the nineteen-twenties was almost identical, in some respects, with that of an earlier day: the Eastern metropolitans were distressed by the uncouth manners of the Western folk—in this case, their impudent disrespect for the patterns of modernity that many of the critics were just in the act of putting on for the first time.

The legend, thus renewed under peculiar circumstances, of the barbarism of the South, especially in its southwestern parts, and of the vulgarity and dullness of the Middle West, for a good many years has governed the approach of the metropolitan East to the phenomena of life in the so-called hinterland. Whether the approach be literary, or sociological, or merely journalistic, the assumptions have been always the same, and the ensuing generalizations have been uniformly tagged with shocked protest and pious exhortation. The South —so the tale runs—is a region full of little else but lynchings, shootings, chain gangs, poor whites, Ku Kluxers, hookworm, pellagra, and a few decayed patricians whose chief intent is to deprive the uncontaminated, spiritual-singing Negro of his life and liberty. But what is more shocking, it is inhabited by believers in God, who pass anti-evolution laws; and more shocking still, it is in thought and deed studiously backward and anti-progressive. The Middle West—the tale says—is a land of morons, boobs, and shoulder-smacking Babbitts, in which, despite a plethora of schools and modern conveniences, an artist soul feels cramped and misunderstood; or a land of lonely farms where men and women drudge away their sterile lives; or of repressions and shams, where tender little Clyde Griffiths's who start out as bell-boys must perforce end up as murderers. Over such pictures the East stormed, or shed crocodile tears, in the clever nineteen-twenties.

The familiar condescension of the East for the West, of course, may be viewed in part as the condescension of the capital toward the provinces, or of the home country toward the colonial dependencies. The American of the Atlantic coast has been prone to cherish precisely the attitude of superiority toward the outlying regions that the Englishman has assumed toward the United States. The old New Yorker or New Englander, when not suppressing his real sentiments in order to achieve a commercial or political bargain, has often spoken of the manners of Westerners in the language of Mrs. Trollope. But in the nineteen-twenties this condescension became for the first time the source of an aesthetic theory which professed to explain the sterility of American art, and of a literary fashion which produced a stream of "realistic" novels that repeated over and over Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's strictures on Puritanism and its fatal extension on the American continent, or Mr. Mencken's volatile dissatisfaction with most things indigenously American.

Although the aesthetic theory has lingered on rather persistently, now and then fitfully reappearing in books like Ludwig Lewisohn's *Expression in America* or V. F. Calverton's *The Liberation of American Literature,* the literary fashion now seems to be falling on evil days. That the vitality has gone out of it may be safely hazarded from the fact that the Pulitzer judges, who are generally careful to stay at least five or six years behind the times, have given an award to Mr. T. S. Stribling's *The Store,* as the novel of the year that best depicts American life. Since Mr. Stribling's theme is the old theme of the backwardness of his native Southern region, we are fairly well justified, under the circumstances, in labelling that theme as dead. Furthermore, Mr. Mencken has left *The American Mercury.* Mr. Bernard De Voto has demolished Mr. Brooks's theory of Puritanism in frontier life. And Mr. Malcolm Cowley has sung a requiem over the

home-coming remains of the Little Magazines and the expatriates of yesterday. Now only a Pulitzer award for Mr. Erskine Caldwell is needed to fill up the charnel house with bones of the long since dead, and to close one of the strangest, but one of the most ominous, chapters in American literary history.

If there had not been a renaissance among historians, which quietly began at almost the same time as the famous literary renaissance, but produced its effects later, the literary fashion would doubtless have lasted longer and begotten more monstrous creations. It is strange—or perhaps it is not strange at all—that the historical movement has received little attention in comparison with the literary movement which it paralleled. The circumstances of its origin have not been recorded; its course has nowhere been charted. The genuine history of American life so quickly succeeded the debunking efforts of the rebel aesthetes that it must have been under way, as spade-work and exploration, for a long time. Perhaps the rousing argument over American culture helped to give occasion for its appearance in a definitive and apprehensible form.

Now, at any rate, we can see that the years when Mr. Mencken and Mr. Lewis were blasting the hinterland with their negative excoriations were years of studied accumulation, in the hinterland itself, of the particular items of an American culture, or cultures, that the critics argued did not exist. Doubtless it was the slow drive of the historical movement that at last, somewhat to the surprise of Eastern publishers, swung popular taste away from realistic fiction to biography and history and ultimately forced even the intellectuals to reconsider the historical and cultural data which they had too blithely dismissed. In these years Claude Bowers's political studies of Jefferson and Hamilton or of the Reconstruction period swept the country; and a little later came James

Truslow Adams with *The Epic of America* and *The Adams Family*. Although some of these books and others like them were in a popular or semi-popular vein, they could not be passed by as insignificant, for they rested upon the solid foundation that the professional historians, unknown to the general public, had long been busy in erecting. From the semi-popular books it was an easy step to the works of professional historians that were slowly but surely tipping the balance of American consideration. Of these works, many of which were of revolutionary importance, I shall name but two examples, for the general principles that they supply: the works of Frederick J. Turner, beginning with his study of the frontier and ending with his *Significance of the Sections in United States History;* and on the literary side, Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought.*

A great many of the more notable histories were written by Southerners and Westerners—men from the regions that had been most severely attacked. Parrington was a man of the Far Northwest; Turner came from the Middle West; Ulrich B. Phillips, author of *Life and Labor in the Old South,* was a native of Georgia who had taught history at the University of Chicago; Beveridge and Bowers were Middle Westerners. Their account of the American past, and, by implication, their interpretation of the present, stood out in bold contradiction to *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* or *The Education of Henry Adams,* which had worked like a sweet poison in the veins of Eastern aesthetes. The new historical movement to a large extent denied the facts upon which the earlier critical statement had been based. But what was more important, the historians found the life of the hinterland rich, abundant, diverse, where the critics reported only barrenness. That it had serious blemishes, all admitted. But the Eastern explanations were not always the right explanations, and defects were not to be removed by the short-cuts that were being pre-

scribed. Eastern criticism implied that there was a sovereign national culture, still originating in the East and destined to rule the hinterland as its subject territory. But in the works of Turner and Parrington, the fundamental thesis read otherwise. The lands that were golden and had caught the westward spill of an Eastern population were no longer tributary. Now they were divided into the selfconscious and mature sections or regions into which the tendencies of their past and their physiographic environment had shaped them. There was no sovereign national culture for them to bow to, or none, at least, that was the private function of a region all too recognizable as an Eastern region.

In the historical movement, therefore, were not only the facts for a rebuttal of metropolitan criticism, but the foundations of a self-assertive counter-attack. The new regional movement at once built upon those foundations, adding to the work of the historians the researches of folklorists who were probing into the songs, legends, and crafts that constituted the living and growing substratum of a native American culture.

The upshot was a counter-stroke of a kind new in American history. The contention between East and West was not new. But the old quarrels had dealt with matters economic and political. In matters cultural the hinterland had in general previously aspired to possess the terms of civilization approved in the East from which it had lately come. Now the old economic and political feud was to reach into a new field. There was to be a battle of cultures as well. The quarrel was as to how people ought to live.

It is neither possible nor sensible to wave aside the metropolitan attack as completely futile or completely mistaken. It was often brilliant and sometimes pointed. But when one begins to ask what way of life the critics wanted the hinter-

land to adopt, one must pass by whatever undeniable merit the criticism may have had for its no less undeniable, and now startling, weaknesses. The works of the critics were anathemas, not credos. It is not easy to disentangle from their utterances any positive scheme to which they would give allegiance. Occasionally Mr. Mencken talked about "decency" or "intelligence." The advocates of "creative criticism" wanted personal taste to overrule aesthetic or historical standards. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks and others were anti-Puritan; but many of this school were so ill-informed historically that they thought Puritanism, Methodism, and Victorianism were precisely the same thing. Nearly all the critics were anti-religious; nearly all preferred an aesthetic judgment to a moral one. All were anti-Victorian, and talked a lot about Freud and sex. If they had any strong positive belief, it was in the power of science to determine the conditions of human life, and in the power of art to soothe and make genteel. Politics, economics, world affairs were at the moment beneath their notice. They did not believe very firmly in anything; but they disbelieved stoutly in a very great deal. They were sceptics, or cynics. They had cast off loyalties to place or kin, or they had had none to begin with. Though their ranks numbered a few men of native Eastern stock, the greater number were of two sorts: migrants to New York from some region of the hinterland, from which they had escaped in search of a career; or scions of the newer immigrant stock—the expatriated nationals from a medley of European countries—who had no intimate share in the historic experience of any American place. Their temper was cosmopolitan in a way; but the intensity of their dissociation gives point to Chesterton's remark that New York, though a cosmopolitan city, is not a city of cosmopolitans. The essence of the doctrine that they sought to convey to outlying America may be stated in one word: Decadence.

But at the moment when the Younger Generation were making a choice for Decadence, the great regions of the South and West had put their stormy youth behind them and were ready for the counsels of vigorous maturity. In contrast with the states of the Northeast and the Middle Atlantic, in which the old American stock had become a minority, the population of the South was almost wholly native, and, if the Negroes were excepted, it was still basically of the old colonial breed. In the Middle West the same stock was still a dominant majority, which was far more successful than the East had been in attracting and assimilating its later immigrants—largely Scandinavians and Germans who were racially akin to the older stock. These regions—physiographically linked as one by conditions of life in the Mississippi Valley, but sectionally split into a north and south by deep historic causes—were the Old West of American story, the seat, for more than a hundred years, of the "selfconscious American democracy" of Turner's phrase. There were many reasons why the regions should examine their life in order to understand its strength or correct its abuses. But within themselves there was no reason whatever for seeking salvation in Decadence.

It is one of the tragedies of American history that the intellectual leadership of the United States at this time should have been even temporarily in the hands of a group of artists and thinkers who were more impressed by the economic and artistic defeatism of post-war Europe than by the living and diverse traditions of their native America. But there they were, in New York. From old habit the regions looked naturally to the East, as one source from which to derive cultural guides and examples. Besides, New York had accumulated not only the prestige but all the material appointments of an intellectual capital. New York had a vigorous press, able critical journals, thriving publishing houses. It had wealth and

power with which to influence or control opinion so far as opinion could be reached through urban agencies.

What the regions of the hinterland did not see at the time was that New York was beginning a spiritual secession from the America of which it had been an organic part. In its population it was already a foreign city, with an amazing preponderance of heterogeneous new racial stocks. Yet the mixed population mattered far less than the ideas which its peculiar sensitivity to the European post-war situation predisposed its intellectual leaders to transmit. For one reason or another these ideas had little to do with the fundamental European tradition which in times past had been valuable to American thought. What came across the Atlantic in the nineteen-twenties was the rationalized despair of European groups that felt vitality and power slipping from them or the rationalized aspiration of other groups, some of which were not essentially European at all, that were clutching after power. They were ideas born of political and economic situations that did not apply in the United States.

Thus it happened that New York transmitted, to the one people on earth who were freest of class-consciousness, the Marxian theory of the war of the classes. To the least neurotic and most energetic of races it offered the Freudian doctrine of repressions and complexes. To a people the greater part of whom were schooled in Protestant religion and morality New York presented, with a knowing leer, under the guise of literary classics, the works of voluptuaries and perverts, the teeming pages of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and all the choicest remains of the literary bordellos of the ancient and modern world. German Expressionism, French Dadaism, the erotic primitivism of D. H. Lawrence, the gigantic *fin de siècle* pedantries and experimentalisms of James Joyce, the infantilism of Gertrude Stein and various Parisian coteries—these furnished most of the catchwords for all the clever people.

While all this was happening, the New Poetry movement was captured by Amy Lowell and the émigrés and given so thoroughly cosmopolitan a turn that it lost all root in America. Its aesthetics, always a little cloudy, became so tenuous that the reaction, when it set in, leaned over backward in excessive zeal for the scholarly, the learned, the exact. Poets like Frost, Robinson, or Lindsay, who wrote out of a frankly American experience, had to be looked at through a thick haze of French symbolist verse. Their traditionalism was as little understood as the more selfconscious and entirely different traditionalism of T. S. Eliot, which came a little later. Prohibition was iniquitous; the Versailles Treaty was iniquitous; politics, God, the Ohio Gang, the Old South, the New Middle West—all were iniquitous somehow or other, and were denounced in the tipsy medley that went on and on. It was the fashion, in fact, to be very pessimistic and a little drunk most of the time. While New York read *The Decline of the West,* Joseph Wood Krutch defined the modern temper as an artistic acceptance of coming doom, and quoted the "Hail, horrors!" speech of Milton's Rebel Angel in the accents of a toper who begins to recall snatches of poetry at 2 A.M.

To offer this farrago to the hinterland of America as representing what was worth thinking about in all fields of thought and was worth using as *exempla* of the good life was like giving to a man in ordinary health the perfected hypodermic needle with which the complaisant quack furnishes the drug addict. To the sections rebuked as lacking in civilization the critics recommended, it would seem, the diseases of civilization rather than the true urbanity and high thinking that would be expected to emanate from a civilized metropolis. To the most powerful nation on the globe, unravaged by war and anything but disheartened by circumstance, the spokesmen of New York found nothing better to offer than a gospel of impotence and defeat.

Out of the various results of this process, three stand out as important. First, the life of the outlying regions and the art which they were now ready to produce—for the first time abundantly, and consistently with their own traditions—were judged in New York in the light of the weak cosmopolitanism or decayed Europeanism in which the critical spokesmen were interested. This judgment, once made and reported, was disseminated in two directions. Since New York is the main channel of communication between America and Europe, it was the New York account of the estate of the hinterland that went abroad. And in telling foreign capitals what New York thought of the hinterland, New York gave it the meaning that Europe was only too eager to accept as correct. The black reputation of America in Europe, though brought about in part by political and economic causes, has clearly been motivated and sustained by damaging evidence furnished from New York. It was a strange disproportion that allowed a single city, in a far eastern corner of America, a practical monopoly in reporting the life of a continental area that it did not pretend to understand. It is painful to recall how often that report has been partial, how rarely it has been catholic. From one point of view, such reporting looks almost like a betrayal of the country from which New York draws its wealth, its power, its life. But more likely it is only a blind presumption, which a dweller in the hinterland can observe with incredulity and growing irritation.

But New York views, New York standards, New York criticism of the nineteen-twenties also passed readily by domestic channels into the hinterland itself. Far from being illiterate, as the critics were charging, the regions of the hinterland now seem to have been almost too literate for their own good. As New York never failed to read British criticisms of America, so the hinterland did not fail to read the books of its Eastern castigators, and often made them best-sellers

in the regions most fiercely castigated. The younger generation of the hinterland, pouring from the crowded high schools and colleges, almost pathetically eager to keep up with the swift pace of the times, were often enough persuaded to hail the literature of disillusionment as the flag of their emancipation. In part, we cannot doubt that the metropolitan onslaught made decided progress within the hinterland; it captured, it perverted, it inspired or deflated. But in part it also angered. As the historical movement gathered force, and as old political and economic issues again came to the front, regional anger was gradually fortified by deliberate cultural resistance of a kind less easily routed than Fundamentalism or Ku Kluxism. A still younger generation has arisen to succeed the younger generation that was half persuaded to deny itself. To this youngest generation Decadence makes little appeal, and the metropolitan promise of New York is sterile. This generation is ready, perhaps, to make the reply which the oldest generation, angered by metropolitan attacks, could frame only in antiquated terms. That reply is regionalism, a doctrine of self-determination which renews, in different terms, the old cleavage between the lands of the East and those of the South and West.

This yielding and this resistance will serve to explain some of the damaging confusions that the student of regionalism will find today in whatever regions he attempts to explore. To the onslaught of dissociated New York and to the mixed reaction of the hinterland are due the contradictory phenomena that flourish side by side. In any given region one is sure to find warring schools of thought, opposing groups of writers, clashing social tendencies. Among the writers there are always regionalists, conscious or unconscious, old or young, who are loyal, and metropolitans who repeat the critical strictures of a decade ago. In Georgia, for example, are John Donald Wade and Erskine Caldwell, and what Wade loves

the other hates; in Mississippi, Stark Young and William Faulkner; in Tennessee, T. S. Stribling and Allen Tate; in the Middle West, Willa Cather and Theodore Dreiser, Vachel Lindsay and Ben Hecht. The same confusion puts skyscrapers in cities whose chief resource is plenitude of land; Hollywood manners in mountain cabins; French eroticism in Puritan households; the urban wisecrack in the mouths of Sut Lovengood's grandchildren. But deeper than this conflict, which from day to day changes its terms, is a constant element: the inertia of the regions, which is also their unselfconscious life, their differentiating vitality. This constant element, which may be veiled but can never be obliterated, is likely to prove the deciding element.

But, lastly, the consequences of the situation are no less important for New York and the East than for the hinterland. If New York is to be an intellectual capital, New York ought to consider realistically what kind of relation to the hinterland will make its position secure and its function good. Obviously, New York cannot endure the impoverishment within itself which would be the result of too severe a dissociation. But that is exactly the result which its past tendencies have seemed to invite. Habituated to a conception of itself as metropolitan arbiter of taste and ideas, New York has erred in thinking that it can impose as freely as it can judge. America is not, as New York thinks, so nearly uniform, or so closely approaching the metropolitan image as to accept without demur any image proposed from New York. It would be more in point to contemplate the other possibility—that eventually New York might no more be able to determine the life of regions around Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco than it can now determine Rome or Vienna.

New York has generally refused to contemplate such a possibility. This refusal, when combined with the aesthetic preferences and forms of life that it has been prone to cul-

tivate, threatens to make New York almost as much a centre of repulsion as of attraction, and tends to deprive it of the continual refreshment from provincial sources that a capital might normally expect. Without too great temerity, one might find in this situation a partial explanation of the decay of its critical thought, or of the rapid transformation of many of its periodicals from "national" journals to sectional and propagandistic organs. Through a like consideration one can begin to understand books that are otherwise meaningless: the labored attempts of Waldo Frank, Granville Hicks, Ludwig Lewisohn, V. F. Calverton to camouflage American traditions with their own peculiar obsessions about sex, Zionism, and the down-trodden proletariat. One can also understand why New York journalists and critics so often essay by sheer noise to howl down any dissidence within their own metropolitan neighbourhood, or the more ominous dissidence of Old New England, to which the turn of affairs in the nineteen-twenties was far from pleasing. But none of these attempts, understandable though they may be, will make New York a good capital, for they do not check the process of dissociation that has already set in. It cannot be checked unless New York will recognize that the hinterland of America is no longer New York's hinterland. But it is, as it has always been, the West, or the Southwest, where lands were golden once, and for dwellers there, self-reliant and not without a power of their own, they are golden still.

VIII. The Two Old Wests

If the regions of Trans-Appalachia had been content to play the role of colonial dependencies to the masterful East, they would not now be regions in the new sense of the word. They have never for very long been so content. No matter what currents of opinion may pull them temporarily this way or that, in the end the telling force is the spirit of their own Hesperian lands and not the distant voices that, however clamorous, are still very distant, and often very strange. The destiny that shapes them is in part the compulsion of present desire, which changes somewhat with the times and men; but it is also the fulfilment of a history which to the Easterner of today must often seem as remote and almost as exotic as American history to an Englishman. The factual details of that history are well known; but it is nearly always presented as "national" history or "state" history. There has been little systematic attempt to isolate and interpret the history of the regions *as regions,* and to make it bear upon their present bias in matters cultural and economic. That, to be sure, is a difficult and hazardous undertaking, but until it is attempted the relations between New York and the hinterland will continue to rest on a false basis.

The land beyond the mountains was populated originally by streams of migration from an East which at first was only too eager to say "good riddance," and to sell off, at a profit, lands in which persons no less eminent than Washington and

Franklin were speculating. Of the various streams, the Southern one, which broke through the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee, was the earliest. Indeed, at first it peopled the Northwest as well as the Southwest, and the states of the Old Northwest bear even today the marks of the powerful Southern invasion which was nearly a conquest. But the lands of the Western Reserve and other places attracted New England settlers, too, and after the defeat of the Indian tribes, the advance of men from New England and the Middle Atlantic states began in earnest. The Old Northwest attracted a fairly heterogeneous population: Yankees, Pennsylvanians, late-coming Germans, Southerners, and others. But the Old Southwest was homogeneous: it was settled almost entirely from Virginia and the Carolinas.

The first of American Wests, while exhibiting everywhere, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, the characteristics of a single "frontier region," alike in customs and problems, which united under the leadership of Jefferson or Jackson to force its needs upon the attention of a reluctant East, was nevertheless from the beginning potentially two Wests: a Southwest and a Northwest. The cleavage between North and South, on a line roughly indicated by the Ohio River, began very early. The Old Southwest represented a western transplantation of the political economy of Jefferson and the agrarian culture of the Old Southeast: that is, it included yeoman farmer, planter, and Negro slave, repeating in outlines sometimes cruder, sometimes bolder and more magnificent, the mixture of democracy and homespun aristocracy, of free labor and slave labor, that marked the equilibrium of the social structure from the Potomac to Charleston. The Old Northwest, at the outset a region of independent and highly Jeffersonian farmers, from which slavery had been excluded (technically, though not always actually) by the

Ordinance of 1787, also developed an early interest in the commercial and manufacturing economy of the Old Northeast; but not until Douglas broke with Buchanan in 1857 did this interest become dominant and seal Northeast and Northwest in the political alliance which has constituted, to the Southern view, the "North."

He who would understand the regions today must find a way to visualize the old differences of origin as they affect present circumstances. He must remind himself that the states of the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi basin are decidedly Western and yet remain Southern; and that the states of the Old Northwest—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and the states beyond—while in a sense Northern, retain, or in fact cherish, a Western antagonism to the East as firm as that of their Southern neighbors, and sometimes more intense. Although the Virginian of 1938 may sometimes unconsciously patronize his fellow-rebel west of the mountains, the two, as "Southerners," have a sense of unity and comradeship that will be lacking between a New Yorker and a Chicagoan, or a man from Springfield, Massachusetts, and one from Springfield, Illinois. A Bostonian who ventures no farther west than Ohio may be surprised to discover that even there the word *Yankee* is not always a complimentary epithet. In the South, indeed, the saying is that if you want to make a Middle-Westerner mad, call him a Yankee. As one goes farther west and south or west and north, either into the very selfconscious New Southwest (Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona) or the New Northwest, or the region of the coast, one is forced to realize that these younger regions (which are nevertheless old enough to be regions) are successive realizations and new adaptations of two geniuses that were from the beginning different.

Just how different are they, and how did the difference come about? Before answering such questions one must firmly

disengage himself from certain fictions. Although the pioneers out of sheer material necessity sometimes put on leather breeches and built log cabins after crossing the mountains, they did not, as the Eastern legend would have it, by such acts immediately transform themselves into a new and singular human species. The notion of Western crudity, though superficially justified in a few particulars, is largely an Eastern rationalization of the East's own claim to superiority and power, and was already antiquated when Andrew Jackson entered the White House. The men of the Western waters, like the Eastern men, were eighteenth-century Americans who brought with them, almost intact, the only civilization they knew. They had no sooner arrived in the wilderness than they proceeded to set up again (much as the Englishman of the story puts on his dress suit in the jungle) the manners, schools, churches, and political and economic instruments that they were used to. If anything, out of sheer excess of demonstration, they rather exaggerated these at first, somewhat to the horror of the East, which, in spite of the Revolution, was still not sure how far it really believed in democracy. The adaptation of the pioneers to the new lands and the differentiation of the regions came later, when the transplanted traditions had time to encounter the new situation. All the pioneers came seeking lands that were golden; and to all the pioneers the ownership of land—the only "real" property —was the prime condition of the liberty that everybody was talking about. All alike, too, had to conquer and dispossess the Indians, and deal with French, Spanish, or English occupation on their borders.

But the golden lands themselves, north and south, were different; the mastery and division of land took place in different ways; and the enemies were quelled, and the land was settled, under different conditions.

To reach Kentucky and Tennessee the pioneers had to cross the widest parts of the Appalachian range, itself a massive barrier that was also a kind of roadway, an actual wilderness serrated here and there by valleys and finally opening into limestone basins, like the Blue Grass of Kentucky and the Middle Basin of Tennessee, which in turn gave way to broken lands, everywhere heavily forested, that levelled gradually into plains or delta.

The genius of this land was in its great irregularity and variety, which both invited and repelled in its changing profile of mountain, plateau, hill, valley, plain, and swamp. It more or less enforced self-sufficiency and isolation upon settlers and settlements that were secluded by the very contours of the land.

The process of settlement was achieved, on the whole, rather by infiltration of families and individuals than by planned colonization. The Southern pioneers looked for their own land of Canaan and found it, in spite of the will of the home states rather than by their help. Their early tendencies were decidedly separatist. Before and during the Revolution they were improvising governments of their own, like the Lost State of Franklin in Tennessee, and but for the distant possessiveness of the home states on whose reputed territory they settled, the original states might well have numbered fifteen (or with Vermont, sixteen) instead of the famous thirteen. The improvised "states," when headquarters got alarmed, quickly gave way to quasi-counties and, after some years of quarrelsome agitation, to acknowledged states of the Union.

Another characteristic of Southwestern settlement was the irregular diffusion rather than the ordered concentration of the population. The cause of this was largely the Southern land policy, *laissez faire* if not haphazard, which gave the best lands to first comers, and the worst to the last. Eighteenth-century Nashville was a negligible cluster of cabins on a river

bank; but over many square miles around it were dispersed the isolated cabins, or "stations," or sometimes the veritable mansions, of highly individualistic persons who in literal Jeffersonian manner preferred the dangers of lonely dwelling to the corruptions of town life.

What these men were achieving was as far beyond the ken of the Federalists of 1790 as the doings of their children are lost upon the Leviathan-planners of the nineteen-thirties. Among Eastern statesmen it seems that only Thomas Jefferson understood, or half-way understood, the Western democrats who were quite truly "conquering the wilderness" and making continental America a reality. The Indians of the South were no more stubborn and dangerous than the Indians of the North, but they were somewhat less nomadic, more solidly planted. At no time did the Southwestern pioneers receive substantial help in their Indian-fighting from the government at Washington. No Revolutionary heroes were sent to lead them. No organized expeditions were sent from an Eastern headquarters to aid them. In their land it was individual settler against individual Indian; or it was hastily organized bands moving from Watauga or Nashville against Indian strongholds. It was frontier armies under frontier leaders like Sevier and Jackson that broke the Indian power in Tennessee and Alabama. The man of the Old Southwest quickly learned (what he was already disposed to believe) that in an emergency he would have only his own and his neighbours' valor to count on. The Federal government was so little a help and so much a hindrance that Sevier and Robertson at one time intrigued with Spanish governors, initiating a policy later to be called "Southern imperialism" and "cotton diplomacy."

Thus the spirit of the Old Southwest, which connected liberty with free-hold of land, also meant from the beginning that one defended one's own substance by one's own valor.

By such valor (call it acquisitive if you will) the Southwest in general was extended and mastered. Save for the opening of New Orleans, little good came to the Southwest from the Louisiana Purchase (which in the long run, in fact, worked against its interest) or from any similar governmental manipulation. What the Southwest won, it forced from the Federal government, or took from other governments, as it took Texas and the lands farther west from Mexico, in wars not highly acceptable to the Eastern standpatters.

The upshot of this long schooling was that to the Southwesterner all governments, and especially the Federal government, seemed not only external, but foreign, stupid, obstructive, slow. From such a government concessions might be wrung by loud protest or shrewd maneuver; but for the protection of a man's substance and liberty, government did not compare in efficacy with the valor of one's own arm. In his suspicion of government the Southwesterner became more Jeffersonian than the Jeffersonians, and to this day he remains so. His valor, developed at times to the point of sheer pugnacity, became a habit which has had its fatality as well as its glory. For fifty years the Old Southwesterner fought Creeks and Cherokees on the eastern side of the Mississippi; and then, for another fifty years, he fought Apache and Comanche on the western side. Unaided by Federal troops the men of the Old Southwest fought the British at King's Mountain and New Orleans. Let it be noted that in both these battles they killed the commanding officers of the enemy forces and either captured or wrecked the opposing armies. During the same years, upon a little more provocation, they would almost as cheerfully have fought Virginia or North Carolina. Under Andrew Jackson they invaded and took Spanish Florida, in a manner shocking to the Monroe administration, which was ponderously and (to the Southwesterners) quite incredibly arranging to *buy* that territory. Under Sam Houston, who had been

governor of Tennessee, a Southwestern army captured the dictator, Santa Anna, routed his army, and reduced him to a comic-opera figure. Under William Walker, the "grey-eyed man of destiny," they filibustered and fought in Central America. At last, under the Confederate flag, they fought the armies of Grant and Sherman in the fiercest battles of all. By these, for the first time in their experience, they were ultimately defeated. For what it was worth, they had the satisfaction of knowing that the defeat was inflicted by armies composed largely of Northwesterners—men of their own breed—and led by Northwesterners; whereas Jefferson Davis, who had too grievously "gone Virginian," seemed incapable of discovering the Andrew Jacksons who ought to be leading Southwestern armies. After the war, they were at it again, with Ku Klux bands, night riders, feuds, and combats of every description.

The modern regime, apparently so substantial, offers very insubstantial foes to a man habituated to a fighting tradition. It is harder now to see one's enemy clear. The Southwesterner, so many times rebuked of late by persons who are careful to remain at a safe distance, seems to be in the predicament of John Crowe Ransom's "Captain Carpenter," who in the poem of that title is heard—

> Asking in the grimmest tone
> If there was any enemy left to fight.

Yet the heroic tradition, if such it may be called, does not signify merely a blunt application of force, for it is as much a matter of spirit as of tactics. It means intensity of conviction, frankness of love or hate, above all an unwillingness to submit one's integrity to abstract dictation or to taint it with even the shadow of disloyalty to what one holds dear. These are emotional rather than intellectual qualities, and it would be proper to say that the Southwesterner's experi-

ence, backed by his land, his climate, his *mores*, turns the balance of his temperament toward the religious rather than the ethical, the intuitive rather than the logical, or, if you please, toward humor rather than wit. This does not mean that he has no intellect. He would swear that a man might be intelligent, or even wise, without being, in a certain sense, "intellectual." It does mean that he has little capacity for being intellectually disinterested. He must take sides, he must be a partisan, though surely not with any loss of chivalry and generosity. But doubt runs against his grain. He cannot so disprize human nobility as to surrender to scepticism. He can hardly concede that human nature is so wholly good or so wholly evil that it can be perfected or controlled by cold instrument of law. Collectivism, under whatever name, is bound to be incomprehensible to him. He cannot visualize a collective mass or have much notion of the class struggle in a world which to his eyes is a loose collection of individuals who must prove their worth to gain his respect. The putative good of society for him is something not to be discussed apart from the variable and breathing entities whom he knows as Cousin Tom, Uncle Dick, Brother Harry. He will follow to the death a leader who captures his imagination; but an elaborate theoretical scheme is likely to encounter in him a divine intractability that is one part sense of humor, one part suspicion, and one part refusal to concede that any external power has the final right to determine his coming and going, his doing or not doing. These are old American traits, cherished in the South, and magnified in a Western atmosphere. They make the Southwesterner poor material for a labor union or a farmer's cooperative, and not much better material for a trade association, though it ought to be said that he takes responsibility much better than he yields it.

The social reformer will see these traits as faults. They are stigmatized as backwardness. The frank cultivation of a

free personality (unless couched in Freudian terms) is analyzed as a sloppy refusal to be efficient. In fact, it might as well be granted that the Southwesterner is not always a good manager. His farm land has often suffered erosion; his cabin on the hill, or his mansion in the valley, may be a little ramshackle, like his state government and his religion, which he simply does not bother to patch up. He is defective in the calculating principle, whose advent in the modern world Edmund Burke bewailed at the very moment when the Southwest was vigorously springing to life. Yet to instruct him in calculation (as New York wants to do) would certainly destroy the magnificence of spirit in which the Southwesterner has waged war for his convictions without reckoning the cost to himself. The penalty of the Southwesterner's participation in the War Between the States was a destruction and impoverishment from which he has not yet recovered; and because of which he still cherishes a remarkably uncalculating resentment that does no good whatever to the tourist trade. The penalty of anti-evolution laws and Ku Klux performances (outbreaks of valor, perhaps, confused under modernism) has been a great outgushing of public opprobrium upon his uncalculating head. Other regions, more calculating, have hardly risked as much for their convictions. Would they? Will they ever? The Southwesterner waits to see. Meanwhile it is worth noting with what uncalculating devotion he follows the banner of Huey Long or Bilbo or Talmadge. Beware of using, too lightly or assuredly, the word demagogue. Is it possible that these leaders win him because they are men of deeds, and not stuffed shirts—not "Gold Democrats" like Carter Glass or Harry Byrd? Let the East look into that matter before it condemns too utterly. There is a Western principle of choice involved here which has had a meaning in American affairs.

Certainly, to the Irresistible Forces of modern times, mov-

ing, it would seem, in obedience to laws so hidden and obscure that even the calculators are amazed—to these forces, said to require prostration, the Southwesterner opposes a still dauntless breast. It will not be easy to convince him that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness can be reduced to such pale equivalences as are represented in statistical tables. Not for such equations was he born of Scottish or English blood. Hardly can he, of all men, be expected to keep a straight face before such hieroglyphics. Only for manners' sake, and that in very high company, will he refrain from laughter.

What do such abstractions mean when he strides away from office or field, with the sun on his shoulders, and looks at the hills, whose every fold in the blue distance both hides and discloses lands that are still golden, whether one seeks them for refuge or adventure. Here, though there be old battlefields at every step, or new highways riving the green with a scurry of motors, no fatality broods, but every prospect invites with the notion that happiness is already touched. Let there be a fence around the grove, with a gate that opens upon a box-wood walk leading to a high-columned porch. And between fence and road let there be a pasture for the horses, with a creek flowing in it, and limestone outcroppings, and iron-weed scattered about (who cares?) and blackberries in the fence corners. Let there be fields of corn to left and right, and beyond them a high hill, well forested, a range for turkeys only half tame, and for 'possum and 'coon that are wholly wild.

This is perhaps only a Kentucky-Tennessee version of happiness and liberty located and made real. But in one form or another, with the details changed only a little, it represents the eternal desire of the Southwest: location, elbow-room, a citadel, a family hearth. This is the stand from which he watches the approach of the Irresistible Forces. Before this he has heard of invaders bloodthirsty and invincible, and he is impressed only to the extent of reflecting that it has been a

while since he has had a good fight. What do the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, or the Planned Economy, have to do with the unconquerable irregularity of his nature, or with the mighty land unrolling, as ungovernable as himself, from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Father of Waters and the Staked Plains? But let them come on, if they will, and he will be ready with his rampart of cotton-bales and mud, and his line of rifles that do not miss. Let no man think that there are no modern equivalents of these rude defenses.

In the Old Northwest, and throughout the Middle West which is its extension, the Irresistible Forces also move, in a tidal wave more vast and rapid than in the Southwest. In other days the Northwesterner would have met this wave with a fierce rampart, and men from Kentucky and Tennessee would have helped him to guard it. Today he builds no rampart. Yet he does not flinch from the wave. He rides it, with perfect equanimity and Western cheerfulness. When it passes on, there he is, unchangeably reposing on the bosom of his prairies. Yet his equanimity, it must be said, diminishes somewhat, and his passion tends to increase, as the meridian of social forces moves west. Near the Rockies, or in fact at almost any point west of the lake region, he is likely at times to be as obstreperous as his Southwestern brother.

If we take the Great Lakes region as a starting-point, the reasons for equanimity are visible and not in the least obscure. The golden lands into which the Northern pioneers—and some Southern ones—came are a region of plains, level or slightly rolling, originally an expanse of grassy prairie thickly wooded in the east but thinning into treeless aridity west of the Mississippi. Toward the south, in the neighborhood of the Ohio River, the land is much more broken. This is the part that was settled from Virginia and the Old Southeast. The levelness of the northern part and the smooth nicety

of contour that the occasional elevations possess are a result of the six great invasions of the glacial ice sheet in prehistoric times. The fertility of these plains, everywhere more pronounced and more consistent than in the Southwest, is due to the same general cause. In the long winters, when the winds whip down upon him with unbroken sweep from Hudson's Bay and the Pole, the Northwesterner may reflect (for he loves to cherish odd bits of scientific lore) that an average lowering of temperature by a very few degrees would bring the Great Ice Age upon him again. That would be a really irresistible force, the thought of which makes social forces puny in comparison. But in summer, the hot breath of the Plains comes up with equally unbroken sweep, and he may well wonder whether the desert may not catch him sooner than the glacier. Between the two threats of fire and ice, what temper of mind serves better than equanimity?

But the Northwestern pioneers thought little of deserts and less of ice sheets. They saw rich prairie lands, comparatively easy of access, whether one came through the Mohawk Valley, as many New Englanders did, or by the Cumberland Road, or, as did the greater number at first, on the flatboats and keelboats that bore whole families down the Ohio to Hesperian landings. By the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 a path of entry was wide open to the Eastern folk—and to the commercial out-reach of New York City, which from that moment eclipsed its rivals and waxed mighty. Not only was this land easier of access than the land farther south; it was more penetrable; it was less a wilderness; in fact it was a fairly open and manageable country, where "planning" rather than ruggedly individualistic growth fitted the topographical situation.

From the beginning such planning was in the order of settlement; and planning was a good deal easier in that new country than in the old ones where it is now being tried. The

Ordinance of 1787 is a startling example of "regional planning"—a thing so neatly imagined and accomplished that it might well produce tears of envy in the harried National Planner of 1938. Unlike the Federal legislation covering the territory of the Southwest, which simply acknowledged an already existing situation, the Ordinance of 1787 laid out, for future realization, a scheme of five states, whose lands would be open for homesteading and into whose territory the importation of slave labor was expressly forbidden. This latter provision, against which the Southern elements of the Northwest chafed in vain, marked off the region from its Southwestern neighbor, and combined with climate, soil, and economic bias to predestine not only the character of the Northwest as "free soil" but its role in the sectional conflict of later years.

Here was the basis of what the historian calls an "American colonial policy," since it furnished a precedent for the erection of Western territories into full-fledged states. But the planning did not end there. Out of the Land Ordinance of 1795 there grew, after some argument, a fairly well-formulated policy of land division. By a quite Rooseveltian stroke, it was arranged to abash the speculator and aid the not-yet-forgotten man by offering the land in small parcels. Furthermore, the division was ultimately on a mathematical township basis, and the use, or usufruct, of section sixteen of every township was consecrated to public education.

There were, of course, ambitious colonization schemes and grandiose speculations; but they amounted to little in the end. And though the actual settlement, here as in the South, was at first a matter of the infiltration of individuals and families, the Northwest as a whole was settled under Federal guidance, Federal guarantees, and Federal protection. Here were no valiant mushroom states or improvised republics, avowedly separatist and a little belligerent, but lusty, orderly territories

growing into a pattern of statehood already cut out for them. And the Eastern government, irritated though it might be by Western clamor, never ceased to show some paternal solicitude for the Northwestern settlers in their Indian wars. The government sent General Anthony Wayne, no less, to quell the first great uprising; he brought an army recruited and trained in Pennsylvania. Later, the might of Tecumseh was broken by William Henry Harrison with an army of frontiersmen to which the Federal government added a quota of regulars and its material support. Let us not forget, too, that the men of Kentucky and Tennessee came up to help on certain occasions.

The War of 1812, which hurt New England seaports, was as popular a war in the Northwest as it was in the Southwest; but except for Commodore Perry's victory on Lake Erie it was a rather dragging, unsatisfactory performance in the Northwest. The results, however, were satisfactory. It extinguished both the British and Indian menace at one blow, and opened the lands farther west to easy settlement—and to more planning. After that, the only considerable wars the Northwest engaged in were fought outside its own borders. They were undertaken—as the Northwest's part in the War of the Sixties was undertaken—with the strange mixture of disinterestedness and calculation which is today the most mysterious and formidable element in the spirit of the Old Northwest.

The paternal support that the Northwest won from the Federal government helped to shape its genius and to distinguish it from its Western sister-region in the South. The man of the Northwest, like his Southern kinsman, came seeking free lands; for him, too, the conception of liberty found expression in the free-holding of the most substantial form of property. But the Northwesterner learned to think—and since pioneer times has with growing enthusiasm believed—

that the function of a government, especially of a national government, is to safeguard one's substance against destruction or alienation. One can of course defend his substance with his own body, and if necessary will do so vigorously. But what is a government for, if not to save you that effort? Your own strength ought to go into the substantial things that express your privateness and worth.

This notion, thrifty and reasonable, is basically a New England conception. Some Teutonic and Scandinavian elements may have blended into it, but it is essentially Brother Jonathan's idea of a national government that is supposed to function like an enlarged town meeting. After 1820, indeed, when the gathering controversy between North and South had been smoothed away by the Missouri Compromise, the Western kin of Brother Jonathan had already begun to shape the temper of the Northwest. In the Western Reserve itself, a kind of subregional planning was going ambitiously forward, and the New England culture spread rapidly west and south over the plains, mingling sometimes chaotically, but more often persuasively, with the culture that came from the Middle Atlantic States or the Kentucky side of the Ohio.

The Old Dominion and others sent out the greater number of colonists; but New England sent out more institutions. The New England influence thwarted the early Northwestern development toward county government (the Southern idea) and determined the culture of the Old Northwest as a culture of towns and townships imposed upon an original stratum of yeoman farmers, and overlaid, in our time, with a third stratum of metropolitan centres. The same genius, no doubt, laid out towns in orderly rectangular patterns, planted elms on all the streets, decreed parks and schools and libraries and churches at all the right places. It brought in the New England zest for public education and set up colleges that were Western transplantations of Harvard or Dartmouth. Above all it

brought the New England economy of manufactures and trade, the doctrine of "internal improvements" at Federal expense, and the high protective tariff.

But observe what happens to this culture and its institutions in a Western atmosphere—in a plains region where few natural obstacles hinder the expansive process. Everything is tremendously magnified. New England caution becomes the very special kind of disinterestedness that is Northwestern—or now, Middle Western. That is, it develops from a deft avoidance of troublesome differences or a prevision of them, into a large and overwhelming assumption that there are no differences. The mixture of populations and traditions in the Old Northwest must have had something to do with the growth of this quality; for the Germans, the Irish, the Scandinavians, the Slavs have poured in upon the Yankees, the Southerners, the Middle States men. In the East the mixture, which is even more diverse, now breeds a kind of cosmopolitanism; in the Middle West it becomes, among other things, Rotarianism. This is a kind of idealism, not so bad, perhaps, as its critics have painted it; but it is also a protective mask for a good deal of inward doubt. Middle-Western uniformity, so much talked about, is not a dull craving for averages, but a necessary assumption, a pure convenience of behavior in a world where it is better to let the sleeping dogs lie.

As for Brother Jonathan's villages, they grow in the Middle West into little cities that crowd upon one another in decorous multiplication, or that grow up into metropolises. The shipshape neatness of Brother Jonathan's arrangements becomes the good order of streets that never could have started out as cow-paths, that obviously obey the principle of the surveyor's line projected across a level surface. What was Yankee handiness becomes a principle of convenience and comfort. There is no trick of convenience that these towns do not possess. There is no conceivable mechanism of Brother Jonathan's

modest industrial revolution that they have not improved upon and greatly enlarged. The East thought of factory production; but the Middle West thought of Fordism and mass-production. The Connecticut Yankee got up the wooden nutmeg; but the Middle West devised salesmanship. What is Eli Whitney's lone cotton-gin beside the teeming inventions of Edison of Ohio, who might be said, almost, to have invented the idea of invention? As for public education, the Middle West fosters not only public schools but state universities gigantic beyond the dreams of Harvard and Yale. Then there is Prohibition. How could it ever have been mistaken for simply a crass reversion to Puritanism? It was much more the transcendentalism of the latter-day Yankee saints; it was a perfectly logical and innocent Western attempt to unshackle man from the clogs that Emerson was always wanting to strike off. Really, that wispy creature, transcendentalism, never took a deep breath till it struck Kansas air. Poor Richard might have said: "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well." And the Old Northwest added: "And on a larger scale . . . to the last point of logic."

The capacity of the Old Northwest for magnifying, or indeed universalizing, its ideas is one of its most striking characteristics; and perhaps a dangerous one. In the sectional quarrel that finally ranged the Northwest against the South, Douglas's argument of "popular sovereignty" was good Western democratic doctrine, Jacksonian, fair, and fervent; yet it missed the temper of the Old Northwest somehow. Lincoln's argument—"This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free"—was a universalizing of the importance of free labor and free soil to the Northwest. It went beyond the New England idea, it violated the old conception of sectional equilibrium, it was the most dangerous thing that could have been said, and the one thing that made war inevitable. This statement, apparently so disinterested and yet

so daring, put the South in the awkward position of a seeming moral offender. In the war itself, Lincoln, a Northwesterner, furnished political and moral leadership to a panicky East; and Andrew Johnson, a Southwesterner, succeeded him. The North's most successful military leaders were the two Northwesterners, Grant and Sherman, who dropped the polite military orthodoxies of the East and devised obliterating, massive, daring evolutions on a grand scale. Like the march of Henry Ford's machines, these movements were glacial, crushing, and yet somehow fervent. . . .

Upon the Prairie Plains of the Ohio country, or the Great Plains farther west, the charm of nature, indubitable enough in its enormous features, such as skies, horizons, stretch of earth, nevertheless repels man from tender intimacies. Thoreau in Illinois is as unthinkable as Wordsworth on the Congo. It is not a place for philosophical relaxation, but for the serious activity that reassures man with a sense of his individual power. On the plains, even on the somewhat timbered Prairie Plains, one cannot imagine so casual and unserious a figure as the Southern tenant farmer who will live in philosophical toleration of an unkempt house so long as he can possess, however temporarily, one small fruitful field, and hunt, loaf, and talk with neighbors. The man of the Old Northwest is not now impressed, if he ever was, with the vastness that weighs upon Eastern or Southern visitors, or with the sense of infinite fatality that would set a Thomas Hardy to brooding. The Northwesterner is not a Robinson Jeffers, to be overborne by vastness, or a Whitman to be exalted by it. He has much more optimism than fatalism, but it is an optimism backed by Western resolution. He does not decline to look at obstacles, but he declines to believe that obstacles cannot be overcome. The defense of the Southwesterner's integrity is valor; the Northwesterner, no less a preserver of integrity, calls on his resolution to the same end. His Western faith, once

more zealous and expansive than it is now, has sometimes dropped into the sentimental optimism of a Mr. Babbitt or a Bruce Barton; a Western transcendentalist is bound to have his little weaknesses.

But his will, as the real armor of his integrity, endures. It is buttressed by a calm often mistaken for stolidity and by his faculty for taking a disinterested view. Vastness cannot be shut off from lonely farms whose very principle of existence calls for sociability and good nature; the Jeffersonian ideal of the independent farmer does not somehow turn out well in the Great Plains country (though nearer the Ohio or the Great Lakes it often flourishes). In the Great Plains it yields to mechanized farms, which express the will of man dominating nature rather than coming to terms with it. But from towns and cities vastness can be and is shut off. In them one may achieve comfort, and a kind of splendor, and the solid reassurance of walls, streets, houses. Vastness can be conquered, too, by machines of tremendous mobility. The railroad is an Eastern idea of mechanized transport; the automobile and airplane are the Northwestern or Western idea. New York has not yet visualized the change they are bringing about.

And so on to whatever things may be rated as good by the instrumental measurements of social utilitarianism—these things are the Northwesterner's, for they may be obtained by an effort of the will. What state leads the Union in the number of schools, roads, automobiles, and radios in proportion to population? Is it Iowa, or is it Wisconsin? The imponderables, it may be, are not to be gained by will alone. But ponderables have their importance, too. In a land without landmarks, measurement is both necessity and virtue. The imponderables cannot be measured, the ponderables can be. The earth must be gashed for iron, or its surface ravaged to produce wheat, or hidden to make a city. If the result is ugliness, drought,

congestion, stockyards, slums, dust-storms, these things, like Sherman's march to the sea, are necessary if regrettable products of the out-reaching of the Northwestern will after things that can be measured.

But how does all this fit Western transcendentalism? That is the mystery; and the Easterner will probably never understand it. Vachel Lindsay understood it. He could see the golden censers swinging over Springfield and hear a Western music in motor-horns on the Santa Fe trail. There are other Old Northwestern cities where the censers swing, or have swung: Indianapolis and Cincinnati are surely among them. If the censers do not swing so perceptibly over Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, let no Easterner therefore imagine that they are fit habitations for Decadence and Dissociation. They are Western market-places, frankly going about their business; and they know that a metropolis is dependent upon a rich and friendly hinterland. On their streets is an easy friendliness not found in Eastern cities.

At any rate, any doctrine, whether of art or politics, that denies the capacity of the human will to surmount obstacles, is not going to please the Old Northwesterner. It is a temperamental impossibility for the Old Northwesterner to say, "Thy will be my will." For this reason, perhaps, his religion tends to be not religion but ethical culture. He fears passivity and relaxation. It is significant that Sherwood Anderson, in *Dark Laughter,* makes one of his characters rail against the feeling of impotence that modern civilization forces upon him. The modern Southerner rejects Communism as an insult to the dignity of man. The Old Northwesterner rejects it because it requires an almost Oriental annihilation of his individual human will—and is impractical. As for the famous radicalism of the West, that is only a continuing expression of the Old Northwesterner's idea of the function of a government. It is a habit, not a political philosophy.

Ten years ago, although Eastern critics conceded that life in the Middle West had all the appointments of civilization, it was berated as dull and unpicturesque. And life in the Old Southwest, though admittedly picturesque, if not almost too exciting, was condemned as lacking in the very modern refinements that, in the Old Northwest, accompanied dullness. There is something here to puzzle over. Is it possible that life cannot be both civilized and exciting? Ought the South to be Mid-Westernized, or the Middle West to be Southernized? These are foolish questions, which can be answered only by saying that the East is not a good judge of what is dull, civilized, picturesque, exciting, or backward in the regions it does not take the trouble to understand. The yokel and the Babbitt are Eastern myths, as difficult to isolate in flesh and blood as the European notion of what an American millionaire, cowboy, or Fundamentalist is like.

Once the two regions were outposts of Eastern ideas coming from North and South—ideas that in their earliest transplantation looked terrifying and extreme to Eastern eyes. But what once made *Western* synonymous with *radical* and *dangerous* is now conservatism of a sort that makes the new Eastern blood impatient. The outposts have become bulwarks. America must now suffer whatever inconveniences must result from having its continental bulwarks so far away from the commercial capital on the eastern edge and the political capital on the mid-southern edge. From these peripheral spots the Irresistible Forces may indeed move, as they have moved before. In the Old Northwest and beyond they will have to encounter the figure of a man of English or Scottish blood, with a little German added, and a little Scandinavian maybe, and with a New England conscience to top the whole. This man has learned well the lessons that the Adams family and Ben Franklin have had to teach. In the great cities of the lakes, or the towns of the plains, or among the great fields of

the plains, or by the rivers he stands, intent upon the massive work and the good job that he bends to his severe and yet ardent will. And in the Old Southwest a figure moves among mountains and hills, or in the deep forests or cotton lands of the Gulf, with songs on his lips, and tales of old time, and often with a gun in the crook of his arm, and a certain look in his eye like an orator's or poet's. At times he seems, like the Man on Horseback that James Truslow Adams has feared, a grim and turbulent giant—at times, a friendly companion.

But both the figures are indubitably there, perhaps immovably there, in regions that suit their being. Not soon will they cease to be the incarnations of the Old Adam, that, like Brother Jonathan in Vermont or Cousin Roderick in Georgia, make the diversity of America a permanent and an incalculable reality. To those who say, smiling indulgently, that these figures belong to a past no longer relevant, there is at least one proper answer: the answer of Santayana, who said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

IX. The Great Plains

Beyond the Mississippi is the land of our last Viking Age, where, riding over plains like a great inland sea, we passed the Rockies, and, arriving at the edge of the Pacific, brought to an end the long series of forays and migrations that began in the dawn of the race, somewhere, perhaps, upon the Asian steppes. The romance of this saga-like time of harrying and conquest is upon us yet. We remember still, as with a harking-back to our Viking youth, the wild horsemen who rode against us there, the bite of arrows deadly as bullets, the raiding, the burning, the slaughter, the gathering of enormous expeditions, mighty as armies, the wonders of strange animals and strange lands, the vast plundering of river and mountain, the up-springing of Rangers and Rough Riders, a chivalry new upon this continent. This romance is so fresh and lively that we hardly wish to know or to analyze the reality behind it. All Americans take up and add unto themselves, from the Great West, something of its mighty superlatives. The legend of heroical and enormous possibility, born of, or at least affirmed by, the Great West is in the swagger of the newsboy on an eastern city street as it is in the profligate grandiosities of our merchant princes.

We all know this, and yet what puny discounts we have made upon our deep-seated empirical knowledge. There are no other differences between our various regions as startling as the differences, physical and historical, between the Great

Plains environment and the regions of the East. And yet many Americans, intellectually persuaded, or anaesthetized into failure of perception, have allowed themselves to believe that the social forces have dulled the West into uniformity and made it ready to be gulped down by Leviathan, as soon as any place else.

To deal with this libel, we must leave the romantic description for the moment and turn to the solid wisdom of the social scientist. In his remarkable book, *The Great Plains,* Walter Prescott Webb has given us, with the West as his example, the most clearly outlined and convincing study that has yet been made within narrow limits of the process of regional differentiation and its causes. And since an Easterner (like myself—to Western view an Easterner) is the last person in the world to interpret the West, either by way of rhapsody or complaint, I cheerfully go to this son of the trans-Mississippi West for scripture and canon.

In its most general aspect the emergence of the plainsman and his culture, which Webb describes in detail, is a later and all but final stage of the larger process of westernizing begun as far back as Jamestown and Plymouth, when the British colonist discovered that life on American shores could not be a mere duplicate or extension of life in seventeenth-century England. But during the first two hundred years of our history regional differentiation went on very slowly and within a fairly limited range of adaptation. In the history of the Anglo-American advance into the Great Plains, the changes went on with great rapidity; and the adaptations were so sweeping and fundamental that they established a culture more radically different from all that preceded it than either the Old Northwest or the Old Southwest was different from the parent East. In its unique and most striking form, the sway of this culture was temporary. Its most romantic phase ended with the passing of trail-driving and the coming of wire fences,

railroads, and the closed range. Since that time, the Great Plains region has entered upon slower stages of differentiation which, when fused with the survivals of its older temper and experience, will give it an abiding character.

Here, therefore, within a comparatively brief cycle of cause and result wherein the relevant factors stand out with exceeding simplicity and boldness, we may examine the process of differentiation that all regions have gone through or must go through. Webb's thesis for "what has been and what is to be the meaning of the Great Plains in American life" applies in some measure to the whole "westernizing" process. He says:

> The key to an understanding of the history of the West must be sought... in a comparative study of what *was* in the East and what *came to be* in the West. The salient truth, the essential truth, is that the West cannot be understood as a mere extension of things Eastern. Though "the roots of the present lie deep in the past," it does not follow that the fruits of the present are the same or the fruits of the West are identical with those of the East. Such a formula would destroy the variable quality in history and make of it an exact science. In history the differences are more important than the similarities. When one makes a comparative study of the sections, the dominant truth which emerges is expressed in the word contrast.

The first important contrast is by all odds environment. Following Webb, we learn that in the Great Plains proper—approximately the region extending from north to south between the 98th meridian and the line of the Rockies—the environment has three qualifying characteristics: it is treeless, level, and arid or semi-arid. To the early geographers this region was "the Great American Desert." It was so formidable an obstacle to settlement that it was marked a "desert" on maps published as late as 1858. Jefferson Davis, while he was United States Secretary of War, tried the experiment of camel transport across the southern end of the region. The Oregon migration of the eighteen-forties, as well as the Mormon

and the Texan-Santa Fe migrations, "jumped over" this strange and supposedly barren territory and headed for points further west. The finger of God traced the route for Brigham Young and the Mormons as for Moses and the Israelites; but the extraordinary phenomenon of the Oregon migration can be explained by the more commonplace fact that the pioneers headed for a moist and timbered region where their old methods of farming and business would conceivably work. The Gold Rush which brought settlers to California has its obvious explanation: the settlers sought gold, rather than golden lands.

But we should not limit the Great Plains environment, Webb insists, to the particular region—the fictional "desert" —which was both treeless and level and semi-arid. In a broad sense the Plains environment includes also those parts of the United States, contiguous to the Great Plains proper, which are treeless and level, but not arid or semi-arid; and those parts which, while being treeless and arid, are not level but mountainous. The Plains *environment* therefore stretches eastward in a great salient that borders the Great Lakes. Then it bends southward along the 98th meridian and southeast toward the Gulf. And it spreads northwest until it touches the timber region which receives moisture from the Pacific. Thus it includes all of the Great West except the Pacific coast regions. That is to say, the Great West over the major portion of its area is conditioned by some of the physical characteristics and folkways of the Great Plains proper.

In the actual Great Plains, of course, was no true desert, except in a few particularly arid and hopeless spots. Rather it was a land of abundance of a peculiar sort. It was a land of grass, which sustained the bison. "Of all the quadrupeds that have lived upon the earth," wrote Hornaday, "probably no species has ever marshaled such innumerable hosts as those of the American bison." It sustained, too, a variety of less

magnificent but remarkable animals, perfectly adapted to their environment: the American antelope, the "jack-rabbit," and the squirrel of the Plains, called "prairie-dog" by the amazed pioneers who first saw its villages. All of these were elusive creatures, whose vanishing powers and extraordinary vitality had a considerable influence, eventually, upon the development of long-range fire-arms. But most important of all, the Great Plains were inhabited by the "wild" Indians, the perfection of whose primitive culture remains one of the marvels of history.

The Plains Indians rather than the forbidding nature of the land constituted the real obstacle to American settlement. In their aboriginal condition these tribes depended upon the buffalo and other big game for food. They used the dog as a beast of burden. They rather existed than flourished. But when they began, possibly as far back as the sixteenth century, to domesticate the wild horses descended from the strays of Spanish explorers, all their former traits were intensified. They became more swift, more mobile and nomadic, more warrior-like than ever, and in so developing became the unquestioned masters of the Plains. In the primitive stage that immediately preceded the coming of the Americans, they had entered, says Webb, a kind of "Golden Age" of Plains culture. Their arrows and lances, their remarkable horsemanship, their sign language and code of long distance signals, and their utter implacability toward enemies were elements of their complete adaptation to the Plains environment in its natural condition.

Already the Plains Indians had baffled all the colonization efforts of the Spaniards, who found them, unlike the docile hosts of the Montezumas, susceptible neither to conversion nor conquest. For a while they seemed equally capable of withstanding the Americans. The American pioneer, equipped with muzzle-loading rifle and riding on eastern-bred horses

or moving in ponderous wagon-trains, could at difficult best do little more than defend himself precariously against their savage forays. A Comanche Indian, mounted on his tough and supple steed, could ride three hundred yards and discharge twenty murderous arrows in the time that it took a Texan (lately come from the timbered hills of Tennessee or the bayous of Louisiana) to reload his heavy rifle.

This was a new experience for the pioneer. The mingled shock of surprise and exhilaration that came upon him is suggested, briefly but vividly, in the concluding pages of the "Autobiography" of David Crockett, who was as typical a woodsman and hero of the Old Southwest as could be found. When Crockett takes his rifle, Betsey, and turns his back forever upon Tennessee woods and rivers, the tale is no more of bear-hunts, stump-speeches, and log-cabin sociabilities, but of endless space where a far-off horizon lures a group of queerly assorted companions, drawn as by enchantment toward some mysterious rendezvous. Herds of bison, heralded by earth-shaking thunder, rush by in endless stampede and then, though limitless in number, are swallowed up in the vast plain. Bands of Indians gallop up out of nowhere, with glittering lances and agile steeds, and then are gone again into nowhere. When they come up and surround him with their silently dividing columns, Crockett springs for his rifle, which had done good service against Cherokee and Creek. But the weapon, he knows, is futile. "As my hand grasped it, I felt that resistance against so many would be of as little use as pumping for thunder in dry weather." So, too, Crockett's little horse, when a herd of wild horses come up around him, kicks up his heels and strives, though vainly, to outrace the untamed beasts. "He hung on like grim death for some time . . ." writes Crockett, "but at last his ambition began to flag; and having lost his ground, others seemed to think that he was not the mighty critter he was cracked up to be." And so it goes, as

the strange impulsion of folk-wandering drives Crockett, with the Bee Hunter and Thimblerigg the Gambler, on the great journey which, we know, will end at the Alamo, where the old epical motif of hardy defense, in a narrow place, against great odds, is to be repeated.

It is all strange and new, and with our backward look we can see in what its strangeness and newness consisted. To state the contrast in Webb's orderly, more prosaic terms, the advancing pioneer had behind him an experience of life in a well-watered, well-timbered region of mountain and valley. Now he faced "a new environment, where there were no forests, no logs for cabins, no rails for fences, few springs and running streams." The agricultural methods of Thomas Jefferson or Abe Lincoln did him no good whatever. The fighting methods of Boone and Leatherstocking merely got him killed, or let him barely escape torture and death. In general, he had to work out "a technique of pioneering adapted to Plains rather than woodland." And in particular, when it came to the immediate issue of fighting, he could defeat the wild Indian only by taking over the Indian horse and the Indian style of horsemanship, and even then he had to get hold of some new sort of fire-arms if he were to win.

The first stage in this new kind of pioneering was necessarily warlike; and the technique which finally brought conquest was based upon a Yankee invention, the Colt revolver which became the weapon of the famous Texas Rangers. The Colt revolver enabled the white plainsman, now mounted on a mustang and skilled in Indian horsemanship, to outshoot the arrow-darting, spear-bearing warrior of the stone age. Even so, the victory was not easy. The Plains Indians resisted white conquest more stubbornly than the tribes of the East. The struggle was prolonged into a period within the memory of many persons living in 1938. But, with however much ignominy, cruelty, blundering, and heroics, on the part of the

United States army as well as of unorganized settlers, victory was at last gained. The land has been occupied, though sparsely in some parts and hardly at all in the more impregnable regions. The remnants of the Plains Indians are now, with their transported cousins of the East, virtual prisoners on their reservations; and they are still an unpredictable force and problem for the future West.

The second stage in the history of the Great Plains (overlapping, of course, with the first stage of conquest) was the great days of the Cattle Kingdom. In this stage we see how, for a comparatively short period, Eastern traditions, whether of North or South, undergo a profound change under the compulsive force of environment and circumstance. Regional characteristics emerge, so sharply defined and so romantically colored that they have left a permanent mark upon folkways and legends. In the history of the Cattle Kingdom, says Webb, we trace "the rise and fall of what might have been a Plains civilization, the happy episode in the history of the Great Plains," when the region was "a world within itself, with a culture all its own."

In studying this regional development we should not forget the role of the Great Plains in the events that preceded the War Between the States. Two rival sections struggled for territorial expansion in the West. Although the South won a technical victory in the events that followed the annexation of Texas, its victory proved of little account. "The Great Plains," writes Webb, "presented a barrier which arrested for a time the whole westward movement, but the barrier was greater for the South than for the North. The Northern system, founded on individual ownership of land and free labor, was *modified* when it entered the Great Plains region, but its essential character was not changed. The Southern system, founded on slavery and cotton, was *barred* by an infrangible law—bounded on the west by aridity just as effectually as it

was on the north by cold. Thus did the Great Plains break the balance between the North and South and turn the advantage to the Northern section, making its ideals, rather than those of the South, national."

While substantially correct in its major point, this statement is a little misleading in its wording. It is not of course a complete statement of the issues involved in the quarrel over western land. Southern leaders were fighting for the existence of the South as a section; and the slavery issue, at the time, was only the focus of a deep-seated national disturbance which in its remote causes antedated the controversy over slavery. Southern leaders knew long before 1860, as Webb concedes, that slavery could not flourish in the Great Plains. Daniel Webster, in the 1850 speech which brought him opprobrium in the North, said that slavery was excluded from the western territories "by a law superior to that which sanctions it in Texas . . . the law of nature, of physical geography, the law of the formation of the earth." Stephen A. Douglas made the same point in his debate with Lincoln.

It would be more nearly correct to say, therefore, that the Great Plains swung the balance of power to the Northern side because of the *expectation* that the small farm and free labor system of the North—and with it much more, including land speculation and industrial enterprise—could be successfully transplanted into the Great Plains. As later events were to show, not only the slave system, but also the industrial system (temporarily masked as free labor and small farms) would fail to transplant with complete success, even in its later modifications. It is not the right adaptation for the Plains.

In such respects the Cattle Kingdom was "a natural institution." It came up from the southern end of the Plains and held glorious sway for about twenty-five years. Then it yielded, as "from the East came the old institutions, seeking, through the forces of the Industrial Revolution, to utilize

the land after the manner of men in the humid timber lands." What destroyed it? A combination of many things: general economic conditions; sheep-herding, railroad extension, barbed wire fences, windmills; and finally dry farming, large-scale, subsidized irrigation, mechanized agriculture, and, back of these, all the special devices of technology and finance that strove eagerly to apply the get-rich-quick methods of the late nineteenth century. It is not beside the point to emphasize the fact that the Cattle Kingdom is, on the whole, the contribution of Texas and the Southwest to Plains history: it is something that Jefferson Davis, who experimented anxiously with camel transportation, might conceivably have come to, as a solution. But the later stage of large-scale grain agriculture and stock-farming, coupled with interest-bearing mortgages and a very high material standard of living, is the typically Northern attempt to solve the problem.

In two significant pages Webb draws a parallel between the history of the Old South and of the Great Plains region. Both the Cotton Kingdom and the Cattle Kingdom "took root in natural conditions of soil and climate" and expanded because the Industrial Revolution furnished a widening market and a system of rapid transport. But though both "produced what promised to be a distinctive civilization," both in time had to come to grips with the system to which they were, in effect, tributary. The South, forced into conflict, chose the path of secession, and then, by war and reconstruction, was so far damaged and confined as to be held away from "the constructive forces of the Industrial Revolution." The Great Plains yielded peacefully. Its economic interest and social bias did not for the moment take a political shape. And so the Industrial Revolution went ahead in the Great Plains.

This parallel is interesting to the student of regional and sectional problems, but it needs to be carried further, perhaps

more speculatively, if we are to grasp its full meaning. If the Cattle Kingdom in the eighteen-seventies had been as mature a section as the South was in 1850—as well populated, as selfconscious in its culture and its politics, would it have given up the ghost without a struggle? The question is academic, but it is worth asking. The long series of minor but violent quarrels between the cattle men and the invading agriculturists does not suggest that the men of the Cattle Kingdom would have quit the game placidly if they had thought, as the South once thought, that their position could be maintained. The agitation that stirred the West in Bryan's time suggests how unruly the West might become, once it had a great leader and was awakened to consciousness of its power. Furthermore, while we are in the realm of speculation, it seems proper to suggest that a Southern success, whether civil or military, in the eighteen-sixties, or a compromise preserving the *status quo*, would not have meant the extermination of the Cattle Kingdom, but probably the contrary. It is therefore not an extreme speculation to infer that the defeat of the South by the North meant also the defeat of the Cattle Kingdom and the rapid submergence of one of the most remarkable regional cultures that America has known.

We get further insight into the present status of the Great Plains when we consider another parallel. The two Old Wests, in the half century from about 1780 to about 1830, were also a fairly distinct, a single frontier region, culturally unified and politically united despite certain physiographic differences between the northern and the southern parts. The history of the Great Plains as a distinct region parallels the history of the two Old Wests during this period. Its culture was unified during the rule of the Cattle Kingdom; and though it had a less conscious grasp on politics than the men of Jackson's time, who were Jeffersonian agrarians of the "backcountry," its temper was another western form of the older

frontiersman's temper: independent, extremely democratic and never servile, abundant in hope and able in improvisation. Webb points out that, while the Old Northwest and the Old Southwest were peopled in some measure by parallel streams of migration from North and South, these two streams fused in the Great Plains and became one type, the Westerner. And perhaps this fusion gave the Great Plains region a certain homogeneity.

What would this Westerner's regional tradition have been like, if the Cattle Kingdom had persisted? We do not know; but we do know that he would have inherited the Code of the West in its heroic age, and that accordingly his democratic tendencies would have been somewhat changed—were, in fact, much changed. We know this Code from the stereotype which, in legend and fiction, survives the force that produced it; and we know that behind the stereotype lies the actual history of Indian fighting and the open range. The modification was somewhat in the direction of a chivalrous tradition. It meant man and horse upon a land that encouraged folkways of code and clan rather than a mere transplantation of old laws and institutions. It meant, probably, a strange new blend of democracy with feudalism—a paradox such as the Old South had in some measure achieved. No doubt this tradition will continue to shape the Western temper, and will have something to do with the future regional development of all that lies west of the Mississippi.

Some of that development may be predicted, if we are justified in using what has already happened as a prognosis of what may happen. The history of the two Old Wests has already been repeated, in a new form, in the Great Plains region. As the Great Plains passed out of the frontier stage and received the spill of population from the East, and felt more and more strongly the pressure of Eastern influence, the line between North and South, which the Southern leaders

sought to project before 1860, reappeared. The clutching East has interacted differently with the Northern and Southern parts of the Great Plains region, and the region has split.

In the Southwest, the influence of the Cattle Kingdom still lingers more powerfully than in other parts. The Southwest still produces cattle, though not always in the old way. It has also extended the kingdom of cotton, or, rather, has become a rival to the Cotton Kingdom of the Southeast. It has become one of the great oil fields of the nation. Since oil and cotton are export commodities whose foreign markets seem to have been imperilled by the economic nationalism of the New Deal, it has lately become alarmed about certain of its regional interests. To Secretary Wallace's analysis of the situation as one that seemed to enforce a choice between economic nationalism and other less practicable policies, Peter Molyneaux, editor of *The Texas Weekly*, answered:

> No national policy, no matter how beneficial it may be for even a majority of the people of a country, can be squared with any humane conception of civilization, if it has consequences for one section of the country as inexorably destructive . . . as the policy of economic nationalism must be to the people of the South. Not only should not the people of any section be expected, in the name of national welfare, to sacrifice so much . . . but no nation, calling itself humane and civilized, should maintain a policy that requires such sacrifice. If the truth must be told, the South has already sacrificed too much that this policy might be maintained.

If in the above ringing declaration we substitute for the rhetorical term, "people of the South," the more realistic phrase "cotton and oil producers of the Southwest," we have a fairly accurate gauge of the distance that separates Peter Molyneaux of the Southwest from Henry Wallace of the Middle West. The Southwest, indeed, no longer shares completely in the economic and cultural interests of the Plains states of the North, which seem to be, with the Southeastern

states, hearty supporters of the agricultural regulations advocated by Secretary Wallace. The Southwest is at least in some measure conservative and free trade, where the Plains states of the North are radical and high tariff. As a detail of some importance, we may add that the infusion of Scandinavian stock to the North has drawn the people of that region further away from Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The Scandinavians, the Germans, and the descendants of the old Yankee stock seem to have a turn for socialistic movements. The Southwesterners, in population and in politics, have a different inheritance, strongly biased by the Southern element.

If in drawing a regional map of the West we add to the Great Plains environment the states of the Pacific Coast, we arrive at last at a picture of the Great West in its modern stage. An Easterner draws this picture with hesitation; and yet the outlines have a certain clarity that anybody can follow. The New Southwest stands apart, already a self-declared region. The affiliations of the Dakotas, of Minnesota, and of Iowa are certainly more with the Middle West than with the Southwest; their wheat lands merge with dairying lands to the east and the corn belt to the south and southeast. The Pacific Northwest, in turn, is a region to itself, which draws toward it Montana and Idaho; and California, with the contiguous territory, is just as clearly separable, in interest and culture, from the New Southwest. In all the Great West, united though it once was in the pioneering stage, there is now division, and it is a division which repeats the familiar North-and-South, East-and-West of all American history.

Some may hold that the development of industrial interests and mechanized cotton culture in the Southwest, and of a large-scale mechanized grain culture in the Middle West signify a kind of final annexation by the Eastern industrial culture of what might have been, but is not now, a regionally differentiated West. But such views, perhaps, look toward

what is passing rather than toward what may be permanent. They ignore the new cleavage between East and West, long since forecast in western political insurgency, and finally made effective in the collapse of Republicanism and the triumph of the New Deal in the Western, especially in the Middle Western, states. This political event, backed as it is by economic fact and social predilection, means that the attempt to adapt Eastern agricultural and industrial methods to a western soil and climate and people has failed, or at least has brought about as much failure as success; and in so doing has all but ended Eastern dominance and has brought powerful new regional issues into the foreground.

We need to fix our attention upon the contrast between the Cattle Kingdom and the Agricultural Kingdom of a later time. Of the Cattle Kingdom it must be said that it did not destroy the natural bounty upon which it was based. But the kingdom of highly commercialized and mechanized agriculture, worked out as a substitute for ranching, has by its very methods endangered that upon which it lives. The insistent peril of drought, the terrors of wind-erosion and dust-storms, the hordes of insect pests recurring periodically, and, finally, a less material but even more discouraging enemy to the agriculturalist of the Plains, the money system, with its mysterious burden of debt and its unaccountable price fluctuations—all this raises the legitimate question as to whether the new adaptation, no matter how cleverly scientific, no matter how bounteously subsidized, can ever fully meet the necessities of the situation. It is better to let the issue appear as a question rather than as a statement. Will the industrial program (for it is that, in the main, rather than an agrarian one) conquer the land by making it conform to man's mastery? Or will man, fearing either his own destruction or the destruction of the land that supports him, seek for some new conformity on his own part?

We do not know the answer to these questions. But we do know that the Irresistible Forces have at last encountered in the Middle West as elsewhere obstacles that may justly be called Immovable Bodies. And we may guess that in the great interplay of forces and bodies, an equilibrium will finally be established that will determine regional trends. Meanwhile, as the struggle proceeds between the clutching industrial system and the unpliant, resisting natural order of things and men, the whole nation feels the shock of the immense combat. The partial or actual success of mechanized commercial farming in the Middle West has led to imitation, wise or unwise, in other regions. Probably the widespread use of farm machinery in the United States is due largely to Western example. At the same time, the advent into national politics of a powerful Western group, well represented in Congress and in the executive branch of the Federal government, has greatly influenced national agricultural policy. Crop control, for example, is a Middle Western rather than a Southern or Eastern idea. Middle Western economics are working upon national politics as Southern economics worked before 1860. A special regional interest has colored the national problem; but, since regional problems are everywhere coming to the fore, the Middle Western problem competes with, rather than overshadows, the cotton-and-tenant problem of the Southeast and the factory labor problem of the industrial Northeast.

But, though the future be unpredictable, the prospect of an enduring division between the Middle West and the Southwest seems unshaken. The final confirmation of the split in the old Great Plains region is at last in the different temper of the two main parts; and the nature of that temper may be discovered in the two kinds of "western" literature which express the earlier and the later phases of regional history in the Great Plains.

From the days of the Cattle Kingdom there comes a heroic

and romantic literature. In its freest, most genuine form it is a folk literature, centered about heroes and legends. Its heroes are Kit Carson and Jim Bridger, or outlaws like Jesse James, Sam Bass, and Billy the Kid; and all of them, like Jesse James in the song, "came of a great race." Its legends are of lost mines and buried treasure, or western adaptations of the tall tale of the Old Southwest; they deal with the high doings of Pecos Bill and the miraculous phenomena of the "Peetrified" Forest. The songs of the cowboys are in part repetitions and recreations of the balladry of the eastern highlands and lowlands. In them often, too, one gets a memorable record of the loneliness and revulsion which eastern America first felt toward the Plains.

> Bury me not on the lone prairie
> Where the wild coyote will howl o'er me

sang the dying youth in "The Cowboy's Lament," and this revulsion is echoed, sometimes humorously, in such songs as "The Dreary Black Hills" and "The Buffalo Skinners." More often this lonesomeness disappears in a serio-comic and rollicking account of hardship and adventure; and there are purely sentimental moments, as in "Home on the Range." Yet the ballads of Jesse James and Sam Bass, although they do not approach the tragic austerity of the great traditional ballads, do at least get clear of the morbidity and the maudlin rhetoric that spoil many native American ballads of criminals and outlaws. They are free of the ballad-monger's whine that comes perhaps from the broadsides; we get in them the faint but true ring of the epical. Of the same heroical stuff, though with a typically American comic relief, are the legends and songs of California, which belong to the same period and are generated by the same temper. With them, too, belongs the legend of Paul Bunyan, the Hercules of the North woods, which, says Constance Rourke, "swept through great

stretches of forest from Maine to California, with the familiar mock heroic outline, with magnification penetrated by a sly and concealed humor and by a naturalistic magic."

These are the works of nameless authors. Among known authors, only Mark Twain and Bret Harte have written conclusively in the spirit of this West. Mark Twain, who knew both the Old Southwest, the Plains, and the Far West, embodied most fully the West of the sixties and seventies. When he wrote as a child of the West, unselfconsciously, not knowing what he did, he was most American, most great. The East, not the West, made him selfconscious and sour. Bret Harte, whose range is smaller, was a selfconscious regionalist from the beginning. He was fully aware of the fleeting and heroical quality of the place and the people. Harte wrote, he said, "to illustrate an era . . . replete with a certain heroic Greek poetry, of which perhaps none were more unconscious than the heroes themselves. . . . I shall be quite content to have collected here merely the material for the Iliad that is yet to be written."

Over half a century has passed since the fall of the Cattle Kingdom, and almost a century since the first Gold Rush; and that Iliad is still unwritten. Some have attempted it, like John G. Neihardt in *The Song of the Indian Wars*. But Neihardt's ambitious narratives are Western as Longfellow's *Hiawatha* is Indian—a fine, but an external rendering. And so are most of the renderings. The legend of the West has fallen into Eastern and literary hands: Owen Wister's *The Virginian* is to the West what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is to the South. It conveys the image as seen from without and creates the stereotype, not the native character. In the next stage it is vulgar romance: the West of Zane Grey and Bill Hart, or, at a little higher level, of Emerson Hough. Even in this cheapened version it has tremendous importance for those who wish to contemplate the image of America possessed most inti-

mately by Americans themselves. The chivalrous cowboy and the rousing desperado, whether in high art or low romance, belong to the American gallery of folk types, along with the Yankee farmer and skipper, Rip Van Winkle, the Parson Weems Washington, Uncle Remus, Old Hickory, David Crockett, Huckleberry Finn, and the Kentucky Colonel.

By contrast, the literature of the agricultural phase of the Great Plains, or the industrial age of the West in general, has turned out to be not an Iliad at all, or even an Aeneid. Sinclair Lewis has insisted on making it something of a Dunciad, and so tempts a critic to say that the Middle West has had its Pope before it has had a Homer. But Sinclair Lewis's affiliation is suspect; he speaks for the East more than for the West, though he does so, surely, with a Western flourish. We describe the literature of the Middle West better by saying rather categorically that it is realistic rather than romantic —Willa Cather perhaps excepted. The theme of this later and realistic literature suggests the moral of the story. It is of Eastern man defeated by nature, or fighting in a struggle in which the pioneer virtues of his earlier history are suddenly converted into tragedy or dullness. No legendary or epical figures emerge. The tone is antithetical to myth-making. We get only the negative myth of the sordidness and hardship of farm life on the Plains. There is frustration rather than victory, and a very modern sort of frustration at that. And finally, in the poems of Robinson Jeffers, the literature becomes antihuman and catastrophic.

Such characterizations as these are not intended as appraisals of Western literature. They are no more than indications of regional differences which may be expected to play their part in the future differentiations of the regions themselves. The sequences in art repeat the sequences in regional life, which are, in turn, variations upon the general theme of the diversity of American life. We cannot foresee what awaits

us, but we know that the great wandering of our younger days is over, and we must now ask, as Walt Whitman asked, what came we into the wilderness for to seek:

Facing West from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, toward the house of maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,
Long having wandered since, round the earth having wandered,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

X. American Heroes

Back in the nineteen-twenties H. L. Mencken was asked —not perhaps by a genial admirer—why, if the American scene was so much to his distaste, he felt obliged to inhabit it. His answer was curt and in the temper then prevailing. Why, said Mr. Mencken, does one go to a circus? From this, the disgusted or unheroical view, we are now far removed. A generation of biographers, historians, folklorists, regionalists, and historical novelists have instructed us in the abundant goodness of the American life of the past. Whatever else we lack, we do not lack great memories. We have heroes, and we want to possess them affectionately as a mature nation ought.

Yet on this as on many other matters our minds are divided. We are not sure on what terms we may possess our heroes. The machinery of the heroic legend is all there, for poets and orators to use, but our approach to it is often hesitating and embarrassed; or else, in the old way of Americans, we hide our lack of self-confidence in bluster, and are entirely too positive.

This division of mind was never better illustrated than in Burton J. Hendrick's book, *The Lees of Virginia*. It is of course a fine specimen of the devotion of the amateur or lay historian to the task of interpreting the American past, and as such invites special remark. But that is not my reason for referring to it. It serves as a text in this connection because

Mr. Hendrick has gone to unusual lengths in setting forth his attitude toward his work. In his "Introduction," after some reference to the great importance of the old Virginia families, he says, "The history of one of these tribes should have at least antiquarian interest." And a little further on we come upon this passage:

> The type of society and public life they represented has gone and gone forever. Probably there was not much in its essential manifestations that the present generation would care to resurrect. . . . Only a rash soul would picture this old Virginia, with its great plantations, its slaves, its upper class, full of snobbishness and of social oppression, its less fortunate stratum of whites, as superior to the present era. But the mere fact that such an order once held sway in this country and wrought great things for their descendants is interesting. It forms a humane and charming episode in the nation's annals—a kind of quiet interlude in the rushing progress of American life.

In other words, after writing a magnificent book, which may tend to make the reader worshipful, Mr. Hendrick enters a cold disclaimer, and assures him that he need not, or must not, be worshipful at all, for the figures he has reanimated really have no meaning except as charming antiquarian curiosities. There may be several reasons for this disclaimer—among them, perhaps, a determinist theory of history, or some condescension toward the share of the South in "the rushing progress of American life."

There is another possible reason. Mr. Hendrick has the retrospective impulse, but he fears and distrusts it. He restores to us a magnificent set of heroes, but he does not want to be caught in the act of creating a heroic legend. So he hastens to assure us that he has no really serious intentions. The Lee legend, although it has a historic basis, does not fit into any rationale that he can accept. If it has no rational existence, Mr. Hendrick cannot permit it any other sort of valid existence. Whatever cannot be explained, or whatever

confuses the neatly arranged scheme of the present, must be stigmatized as "antiquarian." That is, it is myth, or near to being myth. And being myth it is inutile and inferior.

This is an American disease which has afflicted more than one biographer and many a poet. It is in fact a modern disease, which I. A. Richards has attempted to describe on the poetic side. John Crowe Ransom, in *God Without Thunder,* deals with the religious side chiefly, but his words may be used to describe Mr. Hendrick's state of mind when he reduces the Lee legend to an inferior status:

> Myths are construed very simply by the hard Occidental mind: they are lies. It is supposed that everything that is written in serious prose ought to be historical or scientific; that is, devoted either to authenticated facts or to generalizations about these facts. Myths, like fairy tales, like poems, are neither. They are therefore absurd. We are given to understand that their effectiveness can be only with some simple and primitive population, that they are not nearly good enough for the men of our twentieth century generation, brought up in the climatic blessedness of our scientific Occident.

It seems clear that if the interpretation of the past is to be carried on in Mr. Hendrick's temper, the good it will do us will be questionable. We shall doubt whether our heroes are to be accepted, no matter how heroic they appear to be, because we cannot fit them into the rational scheme to which we are committed. If those are the terms on which the gallery of American national heroes is to be established, we shall never have any such heroes. Men have never found it easy to agree within the rational plane, and Americans will never be at peace with their heroes if they have the additional perplexity of being forced to choose between ideas and emotions, with no privilege of combination allowed. This predicament might well form the subject matter of a book like Mr. Ransom's, with a title to parallel his, such as *Heroes without Glory.* The material for it could be obtained from such books

as Mr. Hendrick's or from a type of book greatly inferior to his, generally known as the "debunking" biography, which assures us that the noble severity of George Washington's countenance ought to be attributed to his discomfort in wearing false teeth, or that John Hancock was a notorious smuggler.

Yet, returning to Mr. Hendrick as my example, I find that the end of his book does not agree with the beginning, and in not so agreeing, it illustrates another part of the divided mind that American writers exhibit toward American heroes. Mr. Hendrick, after all, is so excited by the Lee myth that he would like to incorporate it in another myth which, despite his disclaimer, is actively at work in his mind and has a respectable status.

After giving a sketch of General Robert E. Lee—which happens to be done with somewhat less gusto and understanding than his studies of the earlier Lees—he reports once more that the influence of the Lees is "gone forever." They have yielded to a changed America.

> The desolate aspect of the Potomac shore [he writes] manifests this change. One can search the region where the first Richard Lee assembled his plantations and find almost no trace of the ancient day.... But a new fate, emblematic of a new time, has been reserved for Arlington, where the last of the great Lees fixed his home. It is now a national shrine—the house a Lee museum, the surrounding country the burial place of Federal soldiers and sailors, one section set aside as grave and monument for the Unknown Soldier in the World War. As one stands on the porch, the object mainly in view is the Lincoln Memorial, joined physically and spiritually to the home of Robert E. Lee by the beautiful new bridge across the river.

The vocabulary and the tone are here no longer matter-of-fact, as in the introduction. The desolate aspect of the Potomac shore becomes a poetic symbol. We encounter metaphorical terms: *emblematic, shrine, spiritually.* The conjunc-

tion of Arlington and the Lincoln Memorial, joined by the "beautiful new bridge," is brought into rich symbolic contrast with the desolate Potomac shore.

Evidently Mr. Hendrick is a devout believer in the Lincoln myth, which for him is sublimated into a national myth. Involuntarily, quite without realizing what he is doing, he recognizes the power and dignity of the hostile Southern myth, and he would dispose of it by absorbing it and declining to treat it as hostile. In so doing he ceases to write history; he becomes a myth-maker. The action is very instructive. For while Mr. Hendrick has earlier gone on record as a thorough Modernist in his attitude toward myth, he would exempt his own myth, the Lincoln myth, and be strongly Fundamentalist toward it. It is as if a Mohammedan should argue against the deity of Jesus on the ground that the Virgin Birth is a logically untenable and "antiquarian" idea, and then turn around and accept Jesus if Christians will call Him a Moslem.

If now a Southerner—whose mind may also be divided, yet is likely to be less grievously divided than Mr. Hendrick's—should turn this historian's weapons upon him, the argument would run like this. On purely matter-of-fact grounds, what prevents the Lincoln myth from being regarded as also a charming, antiquarian interlude? The Lincoln idea, too, has had to yield to a changed America and may be gone forever. The Union that Lincoln is said to have wanted to reëstablish was never really set up. If Lincoln was a supporter, as in a dim way he may have been, of the Jeffersonian notion of a body of free and self-reliant farmers as the bulwark of the nation, then why did he fight the South? Lincoln made war upon his own idea, and the fruit of his victory, represented in sprawling, confused, industrial America, is a more pitiful sight than the desolate Lee plantations, for it is hardly even a noble ruin. However effective it may have been as a war measure, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was an inept

bit of civil statesmanship, for it put the Negro problem beyond the hope of any such solution as America has been able to use for the Indian problem. By letting himself be used as the idealistic front for the material designs of the North, Lincoln not only ruined the South but quite conceivably ruined the North as well; and if Fascism or Communism ever arrives in America, Lincoln will have been a remote but efficient cause of its appearance.

Thus a Southerner might argue if he copied Mr. Hendrick and brought Modernist dialectic to bear on his cherished myth. Then with kindling emotion the Southerner might go on, prompted to declare where his own myth is invaded, and add that nothing could be more ironic, or perhaps more tragic, than to have Arlington made into a "national shrine," or to have the Lincoln Memorial "the object mainly in view" from the porch where Robert E. Lee once stood. Lee never reëntered Arlington after he left it in 1861 to take command of the state troops of Virginia. His wife, a daughter of the adopted son of Washington, had to flee hurriedly from the mansion at the outbreak of hostilities. She was unable to carry with her the Washington heirlooms which formed a cherished part of the Lee possessions. These were respected by General McDowell, the first Federal invader of Virginia, but a little later the building was looted, and the Washington relics were stolen and hawked about the city of Washington, to be forever dispersed. If any gesture of courtesy emanated from Lincoln to mitigate these asperities, the Southerner has not heard of it; but Lincoln, in viewing Southern secession as insurrection, put upon Lee the stigma of "traitor." And by what sort of an act, too, did Arlington pass into the hands of the Federal government in the first place?

As the Southerner reflects on these matters, his indignation is likely to rise to a point where he cannot with any comfort visit the old mansion of Arlington. In no case will he be likely

to agree that the beautiful new bridge joins Lee and Lincoln in "spiritual" union. He may possibly consider the near presence of the Lincoln Memorial an affront which must be tolerated but cannot be enjoyed. To the sons of Confederates it is a reminder of tragedy, not an emblem of exaltation. If the people of Illinois wish to erect a memorial to Lincoln in Springfield, that is entirely proper. But why should the Southerner be called on to respect as a "national" symbol the great image of Lincoln in the attitude of a brooding god —Lincoln, who did not receive a Southern vote in 1860; who was never president of the Southern states; who was, alas, though with some healing kindness toward the end, a destroying angel to them. Whatever intellectual admiration the Southerner may have for Lincoln the great man—and he may have such an admiration—he will find himself unresponsive, if he retains the traditional Southern feeling in this matter, to the appeal of Lincoln as national hero.

The situation illustrates at its most painful and difficult point the embarrassment we are under in our wish to possess national heroes. We do not agree as to what is national and what is heroic. We cannot get the intellectual and the emotional element ideally united in the single figure who will stand for what all Americans desire. The agreement is hardest to obtain in reference to the period when Americans were most bitterly divided: Secession, War, and Reconstruction. We come nearest to obtaining it in our attitude toward the heroes of the Revolution and the early Republic. But even in this field of closest agreement, we hesitate and begin to make exceptions. George Washington grows ever more faint and far away for most Americans as the image of Washington built in the homely glorification of the Parson Weems tradition is dissected and cast aside, and as the man Washington, an eighteenth-century gentleman farmer, with a little of the frontier and a great deal of the Southern plantation in him,

is more and more insisted upon by the historian. Besides, Washington in his national aspect represents the difficult Federal conception at a time when it was really Federal, not "consolidated." We have progressed or degenerated from a time when a man could be Father of his country to a time when we are the Babies of the state. We have lately freshened our knowledge of Washington, but it cannot be said that we have thereby quickened our feeling for him as a hero. The urban intelligentsia of the East, the immigrant masses in metropolitan centres, the Hollywood producers, the worshippers in Aimee Semple MacPherson's temple—all these can know Washington, conceivably, in a book, as they can know Gustavus Adolphus or the Gracchi. That does not necessarily mean that they can connect Washington with a national ideal.

Mr. Herbert Agar may be right in holding, in his *Land of the Free,* that Jefferson has fared better in American respect than Washington, in the sense that he is a living symbol. Possibly Jefferson incarnates the basic democratic idea which every American feels obliged either to reverence or to seem not to violate. The Democratic party still professes to be Jeffersonian. The Republican party in its origin took the old name of Jefferson's party and at the outset pretended to Jeffersonian tenets. Yet it would not be far from the truth to say that the founding fathers, and Jefferson with them, are becoming more and more figures in a book, understandable enough there, but hardly to be conceived as appearing like a Theseus to aid us against the Persians of some national crisis. We have no sense of their personal presence, although we do sedulously preserve the houses they lived in and the beds they slept in, and pause to stare a moment, in wistfulness or boredom, before we finger the map that will direct us on our four or five hundred miles per day. We no longer name children, places, institutions, for them, but do occasionally use their names for things that least represent them—like

hotels. Of not many counties in the United States can it be said, as it is still said of certain counties in the Old Southwest, that "they are still voting for Andrew Jackson."

With Jackson the focus becomes sectional again, but the line divides East and West rather than North and South. Whether in Massachusetts or Virginia, the opinion is the same, and is about to this general effect: Andrew Jackson was a quarrelsome rough-neck. But west of the mountains admiration still flourishes, though perhaps in diminishing ratio as one moves west or north.

On either side of the Ohio River, the existing portrait of Andrew Jackson—whether one runs upon it in an antique shop or in some Western mind—is a portrait of the Hero of New Orleans, magnificently erect on horseback while Pakenham's bombs burst in vain. Andrew Jackson represents the Western idea of the American national tradition, which is "to be able to look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell." There is not enough decorum in this principle to suit the East, but the West has adhered to the tradition. Its heroes are men of direct action. They always assume the shape of the Man on Horseback who will ride roughshod to triumph. There is a direct link between Jackson's "Smash the Bank," Bryan's "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold," and Senator Huey Long's "Share the Wealth" plan. But the East just as consistently declines to admit the Western hero to the national role. It laughs at the Andrew Jacksons of the West, it patronizes or snubs them, and, if they grow powerful, it raises the cry of "demagogue" and trembles for the *res publica*. The West retaliates by a complete insensitivity to the leadership of the Adams family. In more recent times (aside from a disagreement in matters of religion and prohibition) the West could not see what the East saw of the heroic in Al Smith.

To this tendency there are exceptions. The Lincoln myth

is a notable one. The East accepts Lincoln, but one cannot help realizing what a convenient acceptance it has been. For the East the prevalence of the Lincoln myth has meant the comfortable assurance of power long continued. There is a tacit bargain implied: we take your hero if you take our program. On the other hand, when the West, with a little less design, has accepted an Eastern hero, he is likely to be a Roosevelt, a man with some Western ebullience in him that serves him none too well in his home section.

The line between East and West cuts nothing like so deep as the line between North and South. No inappropriateness is felt in setting up splendid memorials in New York City to Grant and Sherman, who though they originated no further west than Ohio still belong to the Western, not the Eastern tradition. It is safe to say, too, that the West will not raise any great clamor against certain figures in Borglum's great sculptures for the Black Hills monument merely on the ground that they are Eastern figures. But Sherman will not soon be memorialized in Georgia. The proposal that his route to the sea be indicated by markers was scornfully rejected by the Deep South. John Brown may be memorialized both in Connecticut and Kansas, but who dares to propose that his name be honored south of the Mason and Dixon line? The Federal Treasury, under a Republican administration, approved the issue of the Stone Mountain half-dollar to help raise funds for a great Confederate monument; but no Northern figure will appear on that memorial if it is ever completed. The plan to erect a joint monument to Grant and Lee on the scene of the Appomattox surrender had to be abandoned. Although the money had already been set aside by Congress and the design approved, urgent Southern protests intervened, and perhaps suggested to the sponsors that the monument, if erected, might not stay erected.

We are very little better off when we step outside the period

of controversy and war. Outside of the East, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys are hardly more than hearsay. John Sevier and the King's Mountain patriots belong to the regional Valhalla of a few Southern states; Maine and Oregon do not celebrate their names. Sam Houston in his time was a "national" figure, but he would not be well remembered today if he were not dear to Texan and Southwestern tradition. A Louisianian, arriving in Albany, New York, will hardly know for whom the DeWitt Clinton Hotel was named. The upstate New Yorker is no more likely to know for whom Fort Sumter was named. The frontier West might fare better on a test of this sort. Few Americans are likely to miss the significance of Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, and Custer. But here we begin to deal with types rather than individuals and approach the borderland of true folk-myth, wherein a legendary, rather than a historical, Daniel Boone becomes a general national figure, as unassailable as Washington and much better visualized.

In the realm of historical heroics, where the will to believe is forever locked in hard wrestle with the will to disbelieve, the line of ascent to the status of American national hero would seem to be from local to sectional to national. If an American hero does not attain to sectional status, he has little chance of becoming a national hero. And yet, paradoxically, the more richly sectional he is, the less chance he has to become a truly national hero. Is there a practical law of American heroics, which could be stated as follows: To be an American hero, a man must be a sectional hero; but no true sectional hero can be a true, or complete, national hero?

One does not need to indulge in mysticism—certainly not in the kind of mysticism that enables Mr. Waldo Frank to discover Swedenborgian essences oozing from the geography and history of the United States—in order to see a principle of equilibrium involved here, somewhat like the conception

embodied in our Federal constitution. Theoretically, the only kind of really national hero we can have ought to be a hero who embodies the Federal conception. But that sphere is too abstract for a hero to thrive in it. Heroics there are dangerous to the principle of equilibrium which is vital to the American conception of the nation. The Federal sphere will accommodate the statesman, but not the hero, in the epical and tremendous sense. For that reason it may be that Americans have turned instinctively, during the latter part of their history, to presidents who were distinguished but not too distinguished. On the other hand, the sections, which embody culturally related groups of states and have approximate unity of feeling, are the true home of the particular and definite characteristics out of which arises the grand type, the hero. The sections, and within them the localities, are the true mothers of heroes, and our problem is how to venerate our heroes without disturbing the national equilibrium.

In practical affairs the problem is generally handled by a technique of compromise. Party leaders recognize the overwhelming importance of sectional predisposition. For presidential candidate they will choose a man who has enough sectional appeal to carry his own section, but not so much sectional difference that he will repel the other sections.

When compromise fails, the sectional clash occurs that is familiar to the student of American history. If the heroes are living and embody sectional feelings that will stop at nothing, there is nothing to do but have a show of strength. But if the heroes are dead and thus about to enter the realm of myth, we may witness a curious sort of adjustment. The Northerner may attempt to annex the Southern hero, as Mr. Hendrick does, by distilling out of him most of his sectional essence. (It will be noted that in *The Lees of Virginia* Mr. Hendrick plays up the nation and the state and plays down the section —the South.) Gamaliel Bradford attempted a similar feat in

Lee the American. But his attempt to capture Robert E. Lee did not go far beyond the title of his book, which in its details does not bear out his implied claim. On the Northern side, this kind of adjustment comes easier than it does in the South, for the victor can afford to be generous.

On the Southern side, adjustment often takes a different form, which is of the nature of genuine folk-myth. The Northern hero gets appropriated—or cancelled—by some depreciatory or possessive legend. There is a legend, well known in every part of the South, that Lincoln was the illegitimate son of John C. Calhoun; and another one claims that Lincoln was the half-brother of Jefferson Davis. On the Northern side this sort of thing is paralleled by the story, widely circulated during the war, that General Lee whipped and mistreated his slaves. And there is of course a Northern story that leading Southern gentlemen regularly cohabited with Negro women. All these stories are of the inferior type of myth known as gossip, and their purpose is evidently apologetic and more than a little malicious.

But though they do deadly work, they may be less dangerous than another kind of adjustment, witnessed in the sectionalist who denies his own myth and takes up the myth of another section. Often enough this may be noble and sincere enough. In all sections there are invariably sectional dissenters, as there were Copperheads in the North and Unionists in the South in war times. In modern times, too, there are dissenters who might be called disillusionists. We may have considerable respect for a dissent arising from principle, but it is hard to contemplate with any great respect a surrender of native myth when it has the flavor of being done in bald accordance with self-interest only. If a Southerner who is not of Unionist and Republican antecedents whole-heartedly adopts the Northern myth of Lincoln, he is naturally suspected of having an ax to grind, and generally he does. He is

likely to be a "progressive" Southerner, out for all the material improvement of the Northern model that he can secure. Often he will not only take up Lincoln but surrender Lee, so ardent will be his recantation; or he will surrender Lee the soldier and adhere only to the milder, more yielding Lee, the college president and quietist. On the Northern side, however, there is not an equal tendency to recantation. The Northerner often appropriates Lee, but he rarely disowns Grant or Sherman or Lincoln. Significantly, it is most often Lee that he wants to appropriate. The Northerner reaches forth no clutching hand toward Stonewall Jackson.

Such adjustments, interesting though they may be, are hardly good enough to meet our difficulty, and they need only to be identified to receive the mistrust that they deserve. In the field of history our necessary loyalty to fact drives us to a continual checking and rechecking which in the end always upsets the false claim, even at the cost of spoiling some fine myths in the process. The sense of humor of Americans will not deal gently with such conceptions as Lloyd Lewis offers in his *Myths after Lincoln*. What American, whether he hails from Georgia or Illinois, could suppress a snicker at the notion of Lincoln as a "Dying God," a sort of American goulash of Osiris, Adonis, Baldur, and Christ? Besides, we are committed to a peculiar kind of nationalism which obliges us to view our great men in the national or Federal sphere with a certain Platonic reserve. Our regard for George Washington is Platonic.

In the field of myth, where regard ceases to be Platonic and becomes really warm, the heroes turn out to be sectional, and their sectional particularity is too recognizable for them to be taken over where they are not understood and do not belong. There is no better proof of the existence of a barrier than what happens to heroes in our literature. Our history books are rich with heroic material, but not our works of

literature. Whitman, who proposed to write national poems, celebrated Federal soldiers and nobly commemorated the fallen Lincoln; but he let the Confederate side alone. Benét's epical poem, *John Brown's Body,* although it deals generously with the Southern side, nevertheless by its very title, thesis, and conception makes the wrong approach to Southern feeling. We have a few lesser heroical works that deal with minor sectional heroes, but we have no Finn or Arthur or Roland. In our literature there is an astonishing scarcity of works of fiction, drama, or poetry that deal convincingly with Washington, Jefferson, Lee, and other great names.

Only in genuine folk-myth do the barriers dissolve or tend to dissolve. It is hard to question the national pretensions of such figures as Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Casey Jones, and John Henry; or of semi-literary but folkish creations like Leatherstocking, Rip Van Winkle, Huck Finn; or of historical people whose mythical images are greater than their real images: Crockett, Pocahontas, Tecumseh, Sitting Bull, Miles Standish, Jesse James. The only trouble is that they are heroic symbols of an America that we cannot recover by romantic glances and scholarly researches only; that is, it is not recoverable in some high spiritual sense unless we bring the America of today into better harmony with it, as Yeats and Æ strove to do for the Ireland of the eighteen-nineties. But the Celtic analogy is not quite exact. The United States are not one potential Ireland but several. The merest look at the above loose enumeration will show that our folk-heroes are also divided. They show traces of sectionalism and marks of occupation, race, and class.

On what terms, then, do we have our American heroes? Let the crystal-gazer who can peer into the hidden unity of American character give a simple answer if he dare. To those who are not crystal-gazers, a complex and guarded answer seems wise. Let us beware how we nationalize the sectional

hero or sectionalize the national hero. If we are to have any national heroes at all, they are best let alone in the entirely secular sphere, where, when admired, they will secure a Platonic admiration suitable to the highly abstract device by which the nation was originally put together. And the sacred sphere, where passionate devotion has a right to reign, not too closely queried by the cold instruments of pure history, is reserved for the sectional heroes in whose images we know our better, our wished-for selves. We govern best in the first sphere; but we best build shrines in the second.

XI. Regionalism and Nationalism in American Literature

Like many other terms appropriated from the language of science, the words *region* and *regionalism* lose all exactness when they enter the literary vocabulary. But the resulting errors and confusions might well have been expected. The advent of the new terms is in itself the fact of prime importance, suggesting as it does that American criticism has recently encountered a problem it was not prepared to face or even to name. In desperation, the critics have made shift to borrow a name, but hardly as yet have they been willing to get down to the business of definition. For one group of critics regionalism is a catch-word which they use almost as a formula of dismissal for tendencies that they do not bother to take seriously. For another group regionalism is a battle-cry, the symbol of all they feel is worth fighting for in the reconstruction of American literature.

The first group are largely metropolitan critics. Their seat is the seat of power, in the great cities of the East. They enjoy a strategic advantage in that they have the means of conveying the impression that they themselves stand for what is forward-looking and alive; and they are content that the soft word *regional* should come to represent what the opposite party stand for: something, they would like to think, harmless and insignificant enough. But the opposite party refuse to let the soft word remain soft. They are not metropolitans.

They are scattered in groups throughout the United States, now in a city of the West, now in a town or some country district of the South. They belong to the provinces, or, they often prefer to say, the regions. There is war between them and the metropolitans. It is probably only the beginning of a debate which may turn out to be the most important critical discussion in American history, for the issue is: What are the conditions under which American literature can achieve its full maturity?

This question is the central theme of Granville Hicks's book, *The Great Tradition*. Though the major question is painfully narrowed to fit Mr. Hicks's Marxian economics and prejudices, here we may find, incidentally, the typical metropolitan idea of what regionalism is. To Mr. Hicks, regionalism is simply an evasion of the problems that touch the artist as one who ought to contemplate "the fundamental unity of the nation." It is an "escape," which may be merely "antiquarian," or it may be "a sentimental expression of sectional pride." Even when writers deal with "life in a particular region simply because it was the material experience gave them" (like Elizabeth Madox Roberts), they are doomed to sterility if they cannot surpass the narrow regional bounds. The regional approach, Mr. Hicks admits, may be valuable in the early part of a writer's career. "If he knows the manners and speech of a particular region, all well and good. But he cannot stop there; any honest attempt to understand the region quickly takes him outside its borders."

The errors of this view of regionalism are common, even among critics who do not, like Mr. Hicks, hold that a national American literature must take the class struggle as its central theme. The error is, first, in assuming that the character of a regional art is determined principally by its subject-matter, which must be local and special, and next by its manner, which must be romantic and retrospective. The second error, which

grows out of the first, consists in passing to the conclusion that regional art is necessarily at odds with national art, or is at best subordinate, minor and petty.

This is a kind of reasoning that seems to accompany adherence to the Communist party. It has nothing at all to do with the actual phenomena of American literature, past and present. If the regional work of art is to be distinguished by its "regional" subject-matter, then what is the subject-matter of the national work of art? Must it include the whole vast complex of our regional areas, or is it a magic elixir that can be extracted from them? It is not easy to discover an American work of art that meets either of these requirements. Where is the novel, poem, or play that deals with an experience of life common to all Americans, as Americans? I can think of a book that attempts to interpret the "typical" American: it is Henry James's novel, *The American*. But the instance is embarrassing and inconclusive, for it suggests that a novelist must forsake America and become an exile if he is going to purify the American type from all the clinging alloys of local circumstance. And is James's *The American* a national work of art because of its generalized subject, and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* less than national because of its highly specialized subject-matter? Is Poe, who wrote about no particular place, a clearer representative of the national genius than Mark Twain? Do *An American Tragedy* and *Strange Interlude* embody some national tradition not found in *The Sheltered Life, The Time of Man, Winesburg, Ohio, My Antonia, North of Boston,* or *Uncle Remus?*

It is clearly impossible to put on one side the works that are national by reason of their general subject-matter and on the other side works that are regional because of their limited subject-matter. The instinct of our writers, in fact, has consistently led them away from any such false distinctions. Writers who have attempted the great national theme

are rare. Whitman is perhaps the single important instance, and the nature of his deliberate attempt to formulate a national theme is in itself very instructive. On page after page Whitman assures us that the national American poem must be written, and he is always telling us in what terms it will have to be written; but he himself does not write it. Instead, in every passage where he wishes to be quite clearly national, slighting no special interest and neglecting no peculiarity, he resorts to the catalogue, and gives us a list of all species and subspecies of Americana. The important aesthetic feature of the Whitman catalogue is its formlessness: the heterogeneous materials do not fuse into a splendid unity; they remain heterogeneous. They may be accepted intellectually, but they do not always persuade emotionally. The really persuasive parts of Whitman are those poems, like "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," that touch Whitman's own special locale; and these, too, have as much form as Whitman ever achieves.

The test of manner is quite as unreliable as the test of subject-matter. We could get up a highly miscellaneous list of works and authors that might be considered romantic, retrospective, or even antiquarian: most of Hawthorne, Cooper, and Irving; *Moby Dick, The Vision of Sir Launfal, Life on the Mississippi;* a good deal of Edith Wharton, James Branch Cabell, E. A. Robinson, Lindsay, Masters, Jack London. Are these to be excluded from the properly national shelf, upon the complaint that Mr. Hicks brings against regionalists; and are we to put there, instead, only works that are realistic and topical? There could be no more damning illustration of the low intellectual level to which our criticism has sunk than Mr. Hicks's notion that good art is in the present tense, or possibly the future tense. The artists are not so meek as Mr. Hicks seems to think, and they will inevitably claim the privilege of writing in the past tense if they feel like it. It is not the time element that constitutes the weakness of merely

retrospective or antiquarian books; nor is there here any unerring means of distinguishing works that are regional, not national.

What we have in the United States is a group of regions, and writers in them who exhibit diverse and conflicting tendencies even when they are identifiable as regional by the misleading tests that I have mentioned. It is a kind of special pleading to pick out one writer, Miss Roberts, and say: "This is a regionalist," and then to say of another writer of the same region, who might be Mr. Faulkner: "But this is a nationalist." We must deal with them all together, in their regions, if we are to talk sense.

We cannot define regionalism unless at the same time we define nationalism. The two are supplementary aspects of the same thing. Regionalism is a name for a condition under which the national American literature exists as a literature: that is, its constant tendency to decentralize rather than to centralize; or to correct overcentralization by conscious decentralization. Or it describes the conditions and attitudes under which it is possible for literature to be a normal artistic outgrowth of the life of a region.

A regional literature, so-called, may thus very well be, among other things, a selfconscious expression of the life of a region. It may exploit intimate and local aspects of its scene, thus recovering the "usable past" so much referred to; but it does not narrow itself to mere picturesqueness and antiquarianism except as a reaction to an overdose of metropolitan nationalism. The overdose and the reaction are both regrettable. But the pettiness or belligerency that they produce are not the inevitable features of a good regional literature, for a good regional literature needs only (to quote Allen Tate) "the immediate, organic sense of life in which a fine artist works."

The national literature is the compound of the regional im-

pulses, not antithetical to them, but embracing them and living in them as the roots, branch, and flower of its being. But I must here note that the relation between the national and the regional has an importance peculiar to American literature alone among the literatures of Western peoples. We are obliged to face problems that arise out of our fairly late arrival at the critical concept of a national American literature as the logical accompaniment of our achievement of political nationality; and out of the slowly dawning recognition that our political unity has to be very imperfectly accommodated to a real cultural diversity.

The concept of a national literature is a modern phenomenon, produced by the rise of the European nations to selfconsciousness during the later stages of the Renaissance. Before the Renaissance there were critical philosophies of literature, but not of national literature. The European idea of a national literature comes well after such literatures have taken definite shape. It is an attempt to rationalize a cultural tradition which it became almost a point of honor to label as a distinctive possession. The rationalization, furthermore, was made in the great days of the theory of evolution. If the modern Englishman had evolved from a one-cell organism up to the state of Victorian complexity represented in Mr. Gladstone, then English literature had to be exhibited as mounting nobly up the evolutionary ladder from amoebic verse to the lofty periods of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. The scientific analogy was probably a doubtful one, but in other respects the historians of national literatures in nineteenth-century Europe had a plausible case. They could define the nation's literature as the expression, attained by slow accretion and ingrained habit, of a character that might be described as national.

The existence of such a literature depended, however, upon certain conditions: one language, one race, a definite cultural

homogeneity—or at least no heterogeneity fixed by inner geographic divisions; a definite intellectual leadership associated with the centralizing presence of a capital like Paris or London; and besides, a long period of growth under aristocratic and learned guidance, and a second period, no less important from the modern standpoint, of critical and retrospective exploration of the cultural tradition. Whatever critical questions might confront a literature thus formed, no Englishman ever needed to ask of a given work in his own language: "But is it really English?"

Yet in America for a hundred years we have continually felt obliged to ask of this or that American work: "But is it really American? Does it represent the nation?" And we have never ceased to be embarrassed at our inability to produce a really satisfactory answer.

Our embarrassment is caused, not by the impossibility of making an answer, but by a wrong application of the European analogy. We can have, we do have, a national American literature, but not in the European sense, because we have not fulfilled the European conditions. One language we do have, and the rough cultural homogeneity that originates in our basic racial stock. Upon such a foundation, if we had remained a nation of the Atlantic seaboard, without a westward expansion or a great access of immigration, we might have recapitulated European conditions. But in the midst of our nation-making we both expanded into the West and received mixed population-elements that are still far from perfectly fused. Thus we cut ourselves off from all immediate prospect of achieving the kind of unity that in Europe has produced national literatures. Our literature, as an American literature, has no long tradition of unselfconscious growth. The nearest related tradition of that order, the English tradition, however precious it may be, does not come to us hallowed by associations of place and folk-way. It is not a part of our atmosphere,

and to apprehend it requires an effort of the will that Englishmen do not have to make. We are a heterogeneous people, who in sheer consistency of democratic principle have learned to tolerate a mixture of religions and races, and not even the levelling power of an industrial system has been able to efface the resulting diversities. But to increase the difficulty, these diversities have shown a tendency to concentrate within geographic areas, which we call sections or regions. Finally, we have no centre. No one city, for us, combines the functions of an economic and political capital with those of an intellectual capital. But in our literary history we have had a series of regional capitals—Philadelphia, Boston, Charleston, New York, Chicago—which have made their successive bids for attention.

Never have we been of one mind nationally; never have we experienced the "national glow of thought and feeling" that Arnold found characteristic of the great literary periods. Instead we have had a series of glows, appearing now in New England alone, now in the Middle States, now in the South or West. The literary tendencies that emerge from this complex of regional aspirations, as they interweave and form general movements, furnish us with the only kind of literary history that we can call national. So long as we speak of it as American literature, we are safe; but when we insist upon its performance as a national American literature, without the qualifications indicated, we fall into error. It is hard to discover the typically American features shared by Mark Twain and Hawthorne, Whitman and Poe, Dreiser and Cabell; it is easier to discover the common traits possessed by members of a New England, a Southern, a Western group.

For some time to come our literature will not represent a uniform culture, but will be conditioned by the diverse regional cultures upon which it depends for its vitality. We should welcome this tendency rather than rebel against it. For out

of this complexity we may draw a strength that will allow us to escape the doom that seems to hang over national cultures as soon as they pass their peak of selfconscious unification. No other great literature has ever enjoyed the prospect open to us, of an almost indefinite enrichment from provincial sources that are not, in the usual sense of the word, provincial at all, for our provinces are more like nations than provinces. To use the opportunity well, we have need of a kind of Federal principle in our national criticism; and we ought to be suspicious of any contrary principle which would lay upon us the obligation to imitate the decadent stages of the kind of national literature we have never had.

Throughout our history, however, the question of whether or not to imitate has been a compulsive ghost, haunting all our moments of earnest self-analysis with shadowy European analogies that in the sacred name of civilization we are urged to follow, or that in the still more sacred name of American civilization we are besought to reject. We ought to shun both alternatives as irrelevant. Our problems are in the domestic field, and ought never to be settled in the light of foreign relations, inescapable though these may be. The domestic problem is, not how shall we achieve a unity that may be spurious and deceptive, but how shall we secure the artistic and cultural equilibrium that will give free play to our diverse regional geniuses.

That equilibrium is endangered whenever, in an excess of critical selfconsciousness, we turn either regionalism or nationalism into a shibboleth, making either one or the other an "ism" of the dogmatic kind, with followers emitting aesthetic credos and rigid literary programs. We then enter the field of vituperation and combat, where the controversial parties are encumbered with the vices of oversimplication.

From Emerson and Whitman down to Messrs. Calverton, Hicks, and Lewisohn, the national shibboleth or "ism" has

taken on various simplifications. When Emerson urged that we walk on our own feet and work with our own hands, the grandeur of his rhetoric obscured, for the moment, the insufficiency of the principle upon which he hoped to base the independence and unity of American letters. In that admirable peroration of "The American Scholar" in which he deplored our division into a North and South, Emerson had no better principle of union to offer than the Yankee transcendentalism which, even at that moment, in another aspect than the literary, was about to attack and all but destroy the very foundations of Southern culture. His voice was not the voice of America, but of New England, and his plan of salvation was to result not in peaceful unification but in bloody disunion.

In our own time, the metropolitan critics are making national prescriptions that are equally partial, though somewhat more confused. In one sentence they assure us that the industrial unification of America is desirable and inevitable; but in the next sentence they declare that the civilization thus produced puts upon us an intolerable spiritual bondage from which the artist cannot escape save through the shibboleths of Marxianism and Freudianism. Wearily, they proclaim that America is standardized; but angrily they scorn the rural backwardness of regions that prove to be, after all, less urban than New York. Confidently they announce that America must be industrialized; but they sneer at Mr. Babbitt of the Middle West, the creature of industrialism. They urge the provinces to adopt the intellectual sophistication of the Eastern metropolis; but among themselves they bewail the poverty of the modern temper, which in its sophistication has left them nothing to enjoy.

Their error is precisely like Emerson's and has far less nobility in it. As a basis for national unity they offer the apologetic mechanisms that the metropolis sets up to explain away and palliate its own diseases. The impact of their argu-

ments on American thought has been on the whole confusing and corrupting; but it is now clear that they cannot win out completely over the regions, except at the cost of a dangerous struggle.

For already the reaction has set in. Regionalism, so far as it is an actual literary movement, is in large measure a protest, sometimes angry and intense, but more often calm and assured, against the false nationalism that the metropolitans have been disseminating. No one who has studied American history intelligently could doubt that such a protest had to come. It is the American means of restoring our lost balance.

But the regionalists, in the extremity of their natural reaction, have also not been guiltless of oversimplification. The dangers of regionalism, if in its turn it becomes a shibboleth, begin at the point where aesthetic rationalization magnifies means into ends. Consider, for example, the new "regional" consciousness of folk-art. The immense research into folkways that has characterized the regional movement is of enormous instrumental value. For critical and historical purposes we need to know a great deal about American ballads, songs, stories, myths. But there is some doubt whether in recovering these critically we can also recover them creatively, except by simulating a naïveté which, the critics assure us, the modern principle of sincerity will never permit. The regionalist may well retort that naïveté in literature does have a value, but only when it is assumed or simulated. The danger is, however, that the regionalist, in attempting through folklore to express the genius of place, will be content merely to dwell among the artifacts he has dug up, and will thus narrow his expression almost to documentary limits. We shall have to wait on performance to see what the function of a folk-pattern is in American literature; but meanwhile the regionalist should be warned against retiring into folklore as into an ivory tower. Folklore is good, but alone it is not good

enough, it is only one feature of a regional literature. And the modernist critics are right in their claim that modern issues cannot be evaded. The writer of a given region cannot shut himself away under the name, regionalist; but he must, from his region, confront the total and moving world.

Such calamitous retirements, however, are not implied in the organic relation of regional and national elements that I have tried to describe. When the two become warring "isms," they have the common defect of anaesthetizing the artist against reality. Of the two, considered as "isms," nationalism is the more vicious, in its present aspect at least, for it is harsh, oppressive, and swaggering. Regionalism proposes to live and let live, and its narrow or belligerent features will fall away quickly enough when the repressive force is softened or removed.

I return to my central point. Regionalism is not an end in itself, not a literary affectation, not an aesthetic credo, but a condition of literary realization. The function of a region is to endow the American artist with character and purpose. He is born of a region. He will deny its parenthood to his own hurt. Without its background he is a homeless exile in the wilderness of modern life. That self which he is, if not ignobly impugned, will readily be a modern self; and what he creates, if he can resist the perversions of our time, will be both the expression of the region and himself, no matter what the subject or what the style. It is the office of the nation to conserve and cherish this free effort, and surely never by precept or example to delude us into thinking that a novel about a ploughboy is only a regional curiosity, but a novel about a bellboy, a national masterpiece.

XII. Regionalism and Education[1]

Twenty years ago the textbook for a course in Freshman composition was entitled, quite modestly, *Specimens of Prose Composition*. The selections were sober classics to be imitated. Nobody thought of them as intended to answer the riddles of the universe. The student was expected to improve his English, and nobody raised the question of whether he ought, in process, to achieve "the beginnings of a social perspective and a social philosophy."

Nowadays all is changed. The phrase I have just quoted, from an able and, I dare say, a popular book of essays for Freshmen, indicates the responsibility that the composition teacher must undertake. It indicates, also, a new and powerful tendency in education of which the conditions in the Freshman English course furnish only a single example. The Freshman must not only abhor the dangling participle; he must also be led to establish "desirable cultural attitudes" and to understand "this astonishing world of the present decade." Instead of the old books of specimens, we have books that bristle with topicality and controversy. *Opinions and Attitudes, Essays Toward Truth, Challenging Essays* are some of the popular titles. For their contents they draw heavily upon current magazines and books that happen to be talked about. The book of models has become, in short, almost a magazine—a

[1] In a shortened form, this essay was given as a paper before the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English.

kind of Freshman *Reader's Digest* published every two or three years. One publisher has been enterprising enough to issue an *Essay Annual* which makes an entirely fresh garner each year. Besides being contemporaneous, the contents are provocative and ambitious in the highest degree. Not many collectors are so ambitious as the editor of one new text, who proposes, he says in his introductory note, to "set forth significant points of view in various fields of thinking—educational, philosophical, aesthetic, moral and religious, political, national and international, economic and social." But in almost any text the student is likely to encounter articles on "What's Wrong with the United States," "Is Progress a Delusion?", "Liberty—For What?" or "The Good Communist."

All this means that the Freshman composition course is rapidly being turned into an orientation course. The students are to be provoked into writing by being provoked into thinking; and if they are going to think, they might as well be taught what to think about a great number of problems. This may seem to be a heavy load to impose on the average composition instructor, who, often as not, is a teaching fellow, at the moment engaged in a quest for a Ph.D. degree, and therefore is not necessarily in a position to exercise a wise and philosophical outlook on world problems. Besides, how can he cultivate "desirable cultural attitudes" toward a variety of profound questions in a class that is baffled by the spelling of the word *separate* or by the mild iniquities of the comma splice?

Yet I am not rebellious against the new tendency. It is certainly flattering to the vanity of those of us who see in the English teacher the latest defender of the humanistic culture that is threatened with destruction by the great invasion of scientific and utilitarian subjects. If the other departments are going to abdicate their cultural responsibility, there is no

reason why the English teacher should not boldly assume that responsibility. Give us a point of reference, the English teachers might say, and we will map out an orientation that will determine the culture of our generation.

The trouble lies, however, in finding the point of reference. Modern thought is notoriously abstract. We are aware, as never before, that the world is full of knowledge; but never before was it so difficult to apply knowledge to the concrete and specifically human needs.

Laboring under this disability, perhaps, the makers of our orientation texts are tending to treat American culture as a very abstract phenomenon. The orientation that they propose must take place, apparently, in a social vacuum; or at least in a society which by no means is completely realized in all parts of the United States. Like many of our progressive educators, they are much concerned about *what* to teach and *how* to teach it; they rarely ask *whom* they are teaching, and *where*. I suppose that they have been under the delusion, from which few of us have wholly escaped, that the standards of liberal education require the teacher to cultivate the planetary consciousness of Mr. H. G. Wells. They have been busy with a "world approach," or else with something that they mistakenly believe to be a national approach. In this fit of large-mindedness they assume that it makes no difference whether you are teaching a scion of the cloak-and-suit trade in an eastern metropolis; or a son of a plantation-owner or small farmer in the cotton-growing South; or the daughter of a Scandinavian immigrant in the corn and wheat belt of the West. But in spite of the obvious and admitted fact that education, like art, has aspects that are independent of geography and local tradition, I should maintain that it does make a difference. For a consideration of American culture, the point of reference from which to begin orientation is obviously provided by the American situation. It is in the

differences that historians and sociologists unite in describing as regional differences.

Although regionalism is sometimes called a theory, and sometimes a literary movement, it could better be taken as the new name for a process of differentiation within geographic limits that is as old as the American republic and perhaps was predestined in the settlement of our continental area. The regionalists are those who wish to see the cultural differences respected, and not thwarted or obliterated. No matter from what field they draw their data—whether historical, scientific, or artistic—the regionalists agree that America, far from being perfectly homogeneous and standardized, is amazingly heterogeneous and diverse. They do not, of course, agree as to the exact outlines of the regional map. But in general they hold that New England, the metropolitan East, the South, and the Middle West, are well-developed and selfconscious regions that have already attained a high degree of differentiation; and that the younger regions of the Southwest, the Northwest, and the Pacific Coast are building up regional traditions as clearly marked as in the older parts of the country.

It is therefore dangerous to talk glibly about American education or American culture, as if there were no regional differences. The person who generalizes thus freely, on the assumption that some quite uniform national tradition is floating in the air and can be apprehended and applied as the pure American thing, is sure to be met, sooner or later, with the assertion, "That won't do in the South," or "We don't do things that way in the East." Sometimes the challenge is crude and direct, and then we have such violent phenomena as anti-evolution laws. More often the rebellion is so passive and gradual that we hardly realize that it is taking place. But presently it is discovered that education is having no effect; it is being dissipated in an indifferent or quietly hostile

atmosphere. Such resistance, far less spectacular but more general than anti-evolution laws, is a hidden factor in much of our educational confusion today.

The principles of regionalism supply an element of realism which has been lacking in the diagnosis of our educational leaders. While we must grant that the body of educational knowledge is, or ought to be, universal rather than parochial and narrow, we must also acknowledge, if we be honest and realistic, that there is no central authority with power to decide, for the United States at large, what is universal and what is narrow. But it is in our educational and intellectual bill of rights that any section or region or state or city has the full liberty of making that critical decision on its own responsibility.

Nevertheless, students of regionalism well know that such a central authority has often been assumed or aspired to by a process familiar in American history. Whenever a given region, East, South, or West, has at stake some profound regional interest, it is very likely to present its peculiar regional interest in the light of a national interest, and to argue for its general acceptance.

Let us be plain about the matter. In education, it now happens to be the metropolitan East, and especially metropolitan New York, which is offering its ideas in the disguise of national ideas, and so is tending to assume a central authority that does not properly belong to it. The ideas of New York and its metropolitan province may of course have great excellence for the region where they are generated. But they do not necessarily and invariably confer a benefit upon other regions. In fact, the dissemination of these ideas, through the channels which New York possesses and other regions lack, may sometimes be resented as a hostile invasion, and may indeed often be an actual subversion of good and fruitful regional patterns that ought to be preserved and not destroyed. We

would not desire a conquest by New York so complete as to impoverish the national life by robbing it of diversity; or a retaliation from some regional quarter so fierce as to introduce disorder and irritation.

On the contrary, a good regional theory of education would call for our institutions to exercise a dual function. In so far as they can introduce the student to a body of learning that is clearly universal and timeless, they must necessarily abstract the student to some extent from his regional background. At the same time, it would be a mistake to try to make the complete Southerner over into the complete New Yorker, or vice versa. An education cannot divorce itself wholly from its background. It has a clear duty to make its learning or its technique adaptable to the background where it is expected to function. Besides, the institution ought to draw something from the life of its own region and so make its unique and independent contribution to the general, or national, tradition. To emphasize the abstracting function unduly will lead to servility—to an aggregation of satellites revolving humbly around the master orb. But an exaggeration of the purely local would be just as undesirable; it would lead to provincialism or sectionalism in the bad sense. Ideally, we should desire an easy give and take, out of which would grow a rough composite, a national tradition including the regional traditions and having no existence apart from them. This national American tradition might be a little vague and hard to define, like the European tradition; but it would not present the false and vicious simplification under which we wince when a Frenchman or an Englishman fails to appreciate the rich complexity of American traditions.

It is clear that we are in more danger, at the moment, of taking up a false nationalism than of dropping into the opposite error of sterile provincialism. For the metropolitan idea is well advertised, and the regional idea poorly advertised.

In the new kind of Freshman composition texts, for example, the editors do not carry out their announced purpose of orienting the student. He is introduced, to be sure, to a certain range of "conflicting opinions and attitudes." But in the books I have examined, there is far less conflict of opinion than the editors claim. With a unanimity that is striking, our anthologists have favored selections that represent, on the whole, the range of opinion in the metropolitan East alone. They apparently propose to orient the Freshman by giving him as large a dose of metropolitanism as they can get between the covers of a book. They thrust him into contact with the minds of the professional contributors to New York magazines: the men and women who have outdone all previous metropolitan generations in their studied disregard for the country west and south of the Hudson River.

Who these people are, every teacher of Freshman English knows. The average book of "provocative" models is almost certain to contain the inevitable essay on the machine age by Stuart Chase; a bit of socialistic economics from Henry Pratt Fairchild; one of Will Durant's lectures for women's clubs; a few pleasantries by H. L. Mencken; an article on American architecture by Lewis Mumford; a slice of autobiography by Ludwig Lewisohn; an article on religion by John Haynes Holmes or Harry Emerson Fosdick; something about politics or scholarship from Walter Lippmann; and a few literary teasers by Heywood Broun, Henry Hazlitt, or Joseph Wood Krutch.

It is not the inclusion of such writers that I object to. As a teacher of Freshman English, I envy the intellectual attainments of Freshman classes in those fortunate institutions where, without disturbance or bewilderment, the Jew, the Catholic, the Methodist, and the Baptist can receive their common lessons in religion from Lewis Browne, Herbert Asbury, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, to say nothing of Dean

Inge and Bertrand Russell. I do not hold that the Freshman should be insulated from contact with such minds; but I find it exceedingly strange that he should be allowed to discover these, the favorites of the metropolis, and no other minds. It cannot be a very sound orientation which subjects the Freshman to only one kind of stimulating ideas. We cannot all live in New York, or in a place that is like New York. It is an odd way to begin an education, if the student is to be encouraged to put aside at once, as unworthy of appreciative loyalty, the ideas of the region where he will have to live, and to take on, no matter what his environment, the habits of the big-city mind.

Yet if the Freshman must accept the evidence of his book of models, he is driven, however reluctantly, in that direction. Of the life of the great outlying regions, the books give almost no hint. This state of affairs is surprising, when we recall how greatly American literature and social criticism have been enriched in recent years by the growth of strong regional movements in the South and West, led by alert and productive writers, who are fully represented in the current anthologies of poetry, drama, or short stories. But these writers are not to be found in the Freshman orientation texts. André Siegfried or Bertrand Russell may possibly be called in to make pronouncement on Fundamentalism in the South, but not John Donald Wade of Georgia or John Crowe Ransom of Tennessee, who can tell that story from the inside. The New York critics are invited to deliver their gloomy harangues on literature and art, but Vernon Louis Parrington of the Northwest is nowhere to be discovered. We may get something on politics from Harold Laski or Walter Lippmann, but nothing whatever from the great group of regional historians and biographers who have rebuilt, in bold and lively terms, the image of the diverse American tradition that our iconoclasts have been engaged in repudiating: nothing, that is to say, from

Beveridge, Dodd, Bowers, Phillips, Owsley, Milton, Webb, Freeman, Eckenrode, Tate, Lytle, and a host of other able writers. The historians, in fact, have suffered from as great a neglect as the creative writers; but the regionalists who have made it their particular business to explore the traditions of South and West are given no consideration at all.

In the world of print the ascendancy of New York is so much taken for granted that I am sure the editors of these texts were not conscious of yielding to a bias when they chose their selections. They have only followed the New York magazines where these have led, without realizing that most of the New York magazines are hardly any longer national magazines, but are tending to become sectional and propagandist organs. But the bias is there, and it is too remarkable to go unrecorded.

For example, in one new text I find 31 American authors included. Of these 20 were born in the East; 10 in the Middle West; 1 in the South; none in the Far West. Of the 20 Easterners, all have remained in their native region, and nearly all are now in New York City. Of the 10 Middle Westerners, 5 are now identified with New York colleges or periodicals, and 2 are elsewhere in the East. The lone Southern-born man, Mr. Abraham Flexner, also has long since moved to New York. If these regional immigrants may be counted as metropolitan converts, as in all probability they should be, we then have a total of 28 Easterners to 3 non-Easterners. The book is practically an all-Eastern text. The only reference to regional culture that I find in it is contained in an essay by Will Durant, and is as follows: "Why is it that, broadly speaking, tolerance and freedom of the mind flourish more easily in the North than in the South?"

This is an extreme example, of course. The preponderance of Easterners over non-Easterners is hardly ever as great as 9 to 1 in other textbooks. It is more likely to be 5 to 1 or 4 to 1.

It is sure to be as much as 3 to 1. What would be a just proportion, I do not know. Merely to count noses is a deceptive and probably a meaningless kind of analysis. I cite the figures only to dramatize in a rather bald way a tendency that seems worth noting. It would be fairer to rest the case on subject-matter alone. By and large, I think I am safe in claiming that the overwhelming majority of the contributors, regardless of their place of origin or residence, and regardless, too, of the intrinsic merit of their contributions (which I do not here question), represent America of the Eastern metropolis rather than America of the Western and Southern hinterland. If the editors of the orientation texts are to be as impartial as they invariably protest themselves to be, it is time to alter this bias and to show some regard for the agrarian culture of the South, the town culture of upper New England, the mixed culture of the Middle West, and the culture of the plains, the mountains, or the coast, or other regions.

Among the new texts I have looked into, only one, a collection entitled *These United States*, and edited by Professors Jones, Huse, and Eagleson of California, makes any attempt to suggest the regional diversity of America. The opening essay, by William B. Munro, is a persuasive exposition of the views held by contemporary regionalists as to the mixed and pluralistic tendencies of American life. In the national motto, *E pluribus unum*, Professor Munro argues that "the accent is on the *pluribus*." But the ensuing essays hardly carry out this theme. The contributors are largely the old familiar crowd of defeated artists and newspaper columnists.

Yet it is something to have even a beginning. I should like to think that the appearance of one book is a sign that others are on the way. Out of regard for the sanity of teachers and the self-respect of students, if not for the good of the Republic, some person or persons ought to break through the conventional pattern and give us texts with a little more life and

diversity in them than is afforded by these cullings from last year's New York magazines. And surely, if we are to have an orientation course, dealing frankly with issues contemporary and historical, it is impossible to keep the regional text out of the reckoning.

One can visualize two kinds of texts in which the regional approach might be used. There might be a general text which would balance the metropolitan contingent with selections chosen to represent various types of regional culture and points of view. The purpose of such a text would be American and catholic: it would give any American student, whether in Manhattan or Gopher Prairie, some faint notion of the *pluribus* that ought to be associated with the true American *unum*.

But there ought to be another, more specialized kind of text, regional and not general. It would not replace the general text or the non-contemporary collections favored in some quarters, but it would be supplementary, or complementary. Such a book would be, quite frankly, a volume of regional selections intended to bring into lively focus the tradition of a particular region. Each region, of course, would have its own regional texts; and the publishers, though they might lose something in volume of sales, might eventually operate on a less speculative basis—at least they would not be so deeply committed, as now, to the risky and dubious business of attempting to palm off Dartmouth on Alabama. The material of the texts could come from writers old and new; but if only contemporary material should be desired, it is certain that there is no lack of it in any specific region. It can be found in books, or in regional magazines, or even in some of the metropolitan magazines into which regional material sometimes strays.

If the job is not taken in hand, it is likely that we shall sooner or later encounter the problem which has often troubled

the peace of history teachers in Southern high schools and colleges. In the years after Appomattox, the most famous and scholarly history texts were published in the North. Too often they gave an account of the war which was not acceptable either to the Southern teacher or his clientele. The alternative, however, was possibly a text which gave an orthodox Southern interpretation and yet might be hasty or unscholarly or inept: it might be an inferior book that had been lobbied into adoption on patriotic grounds. That particular situation has been somewhat relieved by the availability—though not always the adoption—of good and fair history texts from both Southern and Northern hands. But it would be better not to have to face such a dilemma in the field of English or anywhere else in the field of education.

For, despite our progress upon many lines, it is a general difficulty and not a difficulty confronting English teachers alone. The instances I have named are not isolated instances of the perversions and dangers which have attended the growth of universal education in America during the last half century. The highly colored metropolitanism of the Freshman miscellany is but one example of the dominance which Eastern bias and urban thought have exercised over the curriculum and direction of higher and lower education alike.

The tendency leads to anomalies far more extraordinary than those which are a trouble to the anxious teachers of English A. We need only to recall how very responsive our public school systems are to the guiding hand of Teachers College of Columbia University. Rural high schools have been "consolidated" recklessly in obedience to attack orders from the educational high command, as if size alone made all things possible. And thousands of little communities which had built up real "community centers" around small rural schools and had found in the devoted teachers of those schools their leaders and counsellors, have been either deprived of local

schools or have found their schools sterilized as the attractiveness of positions at small schools diminished in pay and prestige.

The curriculum of the rural high school with a few hundred students (or, for that matter, the town or small-city high school) has been stretched and thinned to include the wide range of instrumental studies deemed necessary in the great urban high school of five thousand students. In the lower grades, the school readers of the children of the Great Plains or the Southern Uplands may be, and often are, the very readers designed to fit the needs of children in New York or Chicago, who never saw a cow milked and never walked on natural grass—children, perhaps, of motley immigrant groups who have neither unlearned their Polish or Yiddish or Italian, nor yet learned their English. The entire common school and high school system of the United States has in fact been planned and from time to time revised (except where local stubbornness or "backwardness" intervened) from blue prints which, on the whole, have in view Eastern and metropolitan problems of education, and not the scattered educational problems of diverse America. We do not need to attribute a conscious propagandist purpose to the system. The unconscious purpose is enough: it is to "sell" the city to the country; it is to "put over," in the name of one of humanity's noblest causes, a certain "design of living" which the hinterland must take up, or be damned as yokelish and unfit. But of course the system often defeats its own ends by overreaching itself and talking what seems like nonsense to the hinterland.

Of a more vicious degree are the perversions which creep into courses and texts that pretend and doubtless aim to be non-partisan, universal, and eternal. Americans so passionately wish to be up-to-date that they are forever likely to take as positive truth what happens to be merely one of various

"new" theories; and this national habit makes our educational system, in its rapidly growing miscellaneity, as topical and superficial as the day's newspaper. Under the guise of an "advanced" view a professor of economics may present a theory of social security or labor relations that applies to Great Britain, but which may be simple nonsense in the Piedmont textile "crescent" or in Nebraska. A sociologist may bring to the bi-racial South a theory of race-relations that derives from Marx and Freud. In the field of history, several generations of high school students have been taught out of texts written or inspired by Charles A. Beard without ever a hint that a radically different and equally respectable interpretation of American history may be found in the works of F. J. Turner. But the most astonishing of perversions is found in the forthright intrusion of particular social gospels into works of physical science. It seems incredible, but it is true that a well-known introductory text for college biology courses contains, in its closing chapter, a direct admonishment to the effect that collectivism and not individualism is the coming order. This admonishment comes at the end of a chapter on evolution. The author, a professor of zoology, indicates that individual man may conceivably have reached the end of *biological* evolution. But, he says, "there is still a hopeful outlook for social evolution.... The advance from the Old Stone Age to the present has been due largely to increasing cooperation, increasing freedom through increasing subordination to the group." The Communist or the Fascist could not have put it better—but what is such a statement doing in a biology textbook?

It would be folly to imagine any simple cure for such malaises of the human mind as exist in the mind of the hortatory professor of zoology; or of such confusions as evidently exist in our educational system. We certainly cannot afford to cater slavishly to all or any local peculiarities. Edu-

cation, as a universal system, cannot refrain from injuring the tender sensibilities of Americans who may, for instance, insist upon their right to believe the world is flat.

Nevertheless we can escape some of our difficulties by recognizing regionalism as a natural function of our educational body politic. If it is good pedagogy to proceed from the familiar to the strange, then the regional text has its place in some courses; and especially in any courses which propose to guide the student toward some more stable and gracious conception of civilization than now prevails. Perhaps it is desirable for the Georgia Freshman to know something about modern physics or the skepticism of Bertrand Russell; but it is no paradox to argue that his critical approach to such subjects will not be hampered, and may be improved, if he is first allowed to get some respect and understanding for the plantation culture of which he is a rooted part. We need to halt the uprooting process in modern education and to give our students the sense of belonging somewhere and being somebody that modern thought in the abstract seems incapable of providing. The regional text will also harmonize with the new and reasonable tendency to break through the strict barriers of course-subjects; and the Freshman English course will join hands with the courses in history or political science. Sophistication will come soon enough, anyway; and often enough too cheaply, too superficially. The regional text ought to carry the most difficult lesson that moderns have to learn: that the kingdom of God is within you, or at least around you, and is not a far-off dazzle of towers that may not, after all, really exist.

The advent of regionalism in the Freshman work—if such should come about—would be only one phase of its penetration into English departments, or, for that matter, into all college activities that touch the foundations and tendencies of American life. Since the publication of Parrington's *Main*

Currents in American Thought and similar works, it is no longer possible for the subject of American literature, whether in graduate or undergraduate courses, to be treated as an Eastern product, a little diluted by barbarian infusions from South and West. The new tendency is to view American literature as the expression of regional cultures which blend into the composite national culture. In undergraduate courses this means that a form of regionalism is actually being taught as a basic condition for understanding our literary past and present. In the graduate work it leads to studies of the regional material near at hand, whether it be the collection of ballads, the study of a cultural pattern, or the biography of a regional figure. By this process the graduate student and his professor find themselves in the surprising new role of interpreters of a region and conservers of a regional tradition.

From this role it is an easy step to the role of regional spokesman. Into many English departments there has recently come a new type of professor, who is a creative writer or critic, and maybe the author of a novel or of a topical essay as often as a contributor to PMLA. Such professors, and with them, the eminent and non-academic poets or dramatists whom universities are beginning to call into residence, tend often to become outspoken regionalists, who gather students of similar minds around them and become in time the nucleus for active regional groups. They publish magazines and anthologies, they write and direct plays and manage theatres, they edit book-review pages. Sometimes the magazines are ephemeral; but the substantial success of *The Virginia Quarterly Review, The Southern Review, The Midland, The Sewanee Review, The Frontier,* and various others augurs well for the future of the magazine that originates in the literary interest of an English department working in a particular region.

Behind such unmistakable expressions of the regional trend

of English departments lies the new tendency of colleges and universities—and eventually, we may suppose, of high schools and common schools—to adapt themselves anew to their regional environment. The sociologist is to be found adventuring in the slums, the court-rooms, the farm lands of his contiguous territory; his adventure is already convincing him, in many cases, that the regional approach has merit. The economist, going about the market-place, is having a similar experience; and the political scientist and the historian are struggling as never before with the definition and instrumentation of regional factors. Then, too, the widespread activities of the New Deal, in such enterprises as the TVA and in the work of state planning commissions as well as in private business, are calling into the service of regional communities the geologist, the professor of medicine, the engineer. Such activities take away the colleges and universities from academic isolation and bind them close to regional life, with powerful consequences for their own inner order as well as their external influence. Regionalism takes on more and more of an official and lively status as this process gains way; it becomes more definitely a counter-tendency, working through educational institutions, to the national regimentation into which we seemed about to slip. As it gains in strength, it will lead to changes, both in higher and in lower systems of education, of a sort not now predictable. But certainly we shall have fewer of those missionary institutions which conceive that their duty consists in the uncritical and servile transmission of the standards of a supposedly cultured region to a supposedly uncultured and barren one. We have had enough of this one-way traffic of educational and social ideas. We need a two-way system, which allows ideas not only to come in but to go out. A right principle of cultural diffusion would hold that our colleges ought to become true cultural centres, receiving at least as much cultural vitality from their environ-

ing regions as from more distant ones. For such centres, regional but not in any sense parochial, the region becomes laboratory, audience, and judge. Their educational direction may be toward the universal, but it will then be a universal that is wrapped up with a particular way of life.

SOUTHERN ESSAYS

XIII. The Dilemma of the Southern Liberals[1]

Twenty-five years ago the Southern liberals were a new party, flushed with enthusiasm for a progressive future. Modern civilization was booming, the millennium was just ahead, but the South, stubbornly brooding over its memories of war and reconstruction, kept on cherishing what the liberals called "outworn traditions." What was more natural, then, than for Walter Hines Page, the bustling editor of the *World's Work,* to call on the South to "fling off the dead hand of the past." "What North Carolina needs," he cried, when the Old Confederates were slow about applauding the notions he had picked up in Boston and New York, "is a few firstclass funerals." In the bright tomorrow of his liberal vision there must be no walking mummies—no unregenerate traditionalists who did not know they were dead.

The years have gone by, and the tomorrow that Page looked for has come. It is not as bright as Page thought it would be; it is not a millennium. The South has remained the South, but it has changed somewhat in the direction that Page advocated. It is provided with much of the institutional machinery that liberals believe in: a common school system, large universities, good roads, libraries, hospitals; and with these, a formidable sprinkling of the industrial enterprises that were

[1] This essay is an expanded version of an article which was first published in *The American Mercury,* February, 1934.

supposed to bring wealth, the *sine qua non* of late nineteenth-century liberalism. But now the South looks at these great works and is tortured with doubt. By some irony of fate, modern civilization has been stricken with profound convulsions at the very moment when the South seemed on the point of making a belated choice in its favor. Civilization is not living up to the promises that were made in its name, and the Southern liberals stand to lose the prestige that the boom days gave to their progressive doctrines. They are prophets whose miracle has not worked. The stage was set, the people were waiting for fire to come down from heaven, but Jehovah has perversely favored the rude priesthood of Baal.

The crisis forces upon the Southern liberals obligations which the upswing of industrial prosperity had previously permitted them to avoid. Once they escaped the necessity of realistic thinking and acquired an odor of sanctity by claiming to be on the side of the angels; for though they had turned over the old-fashioned angels to the Negroes, like an old suit of clothes, the liberals had made up some substitute angels, called Progress, Sanitation, Education, and Prosperity. But now the modern angels begin to smell of brimstone. The liberals will have to remove the soot marks or find substitute angels again. Their task will be more difficult than before, for industrial civilization does not so readily produce the money that was once the means of persuading the Southern Mummies to become Southern Babbitts. The liberals will have to furnish proof where they once had only to make promises. They will have to be a little more specific in their descriptions of the civilization which, they have long claimed, is so much nobler and more beneficent than the kind of civilization the South has traditionally preferred. In the process, they will have to forsake their old attitude of disinterestedness, which they took to be a privilege of making no commitments to parties and principles. They must either evolve a new

program or align themselves with the parties that have programs to offer.

What commitments they will make, I do not attempt to say. Perhaps they already show some of the confusion of mind that might be expected. Some of them are undoubtedly quite ready to join the swing of the American Leviathan toward "social democracy," and these naturally hail the Roosevelt administration as a life-saver. Others are greatly attracted to the Russian experiment and are prepared to follow the Little Bolsheviks of the *New Republic* wherever the cries of the downtrodden proletariat seem to call them. Both directions, since they involve drastic curtailment of individual freedom, are strange paths for men who call themselves liberals. Whatever decision they make will have a considerable domestic importance for the South, for they occupy positions of influence: they edit newspapers, write books, direct educational policies, and here and there make ventures into politics. Although they are a decided minority in the South, they have it in their power to affect the trend of Southern life for better or worse, and therefore their present strategy deserves a serious examination in the light of their historical relation to the sectional problems of the South.

With all their talk about a new social order, the modern successors of Walter Hines Page have less to say than of old about the dead hand of the past. Instead they are now appealing to the Southern past and attempting to rationalize twentieth-century liberalism by getting up a pedigree for it. Howard Odum has been discovering genial devices for weaving the social forces into the same web with magnolia blossoms and Negro folklore. George Fort Milton and Judge Robert Winston, who are dissenters from the ante-bellum tradition and advocates of progressivism, have fortified their rebelliousness by writing biographies of Andrew Johnson, who was a Southern dissenter. Broadus Mitchell has essayed to

strengthen his advocacy of industrialism by eulogizing William Gregg of South Carolina, who was a cotton mill pioneer. But the most notable reversal of position is that of Gerald Johnson, who as late as February, 1931, paid his derisive respects to the twelve authors of *I'll Take My Stand.* It was amazing, he said in *Scribner's Magazine,* that "twelve men, all born and raised in the South, all literate, and all of legal age" should exhibit a special loyalty to the agrarian tradition of the South and be guilty of impiety towards the ruling gods of industrialism. What the South needed, he argued, was to "erect a glittering civilization in the midst of industrialism." But by October, 1932, civilization had entirely ceased to glitter, and Mr. Johnson displayed all the symptoms of a liberal in distress. Mounting the Charleston rostrum which in other days was occupied by Rhett and Calhoun, Mr. Johnson helped dedicate a monument to the Confederate defenders of Fort Sumter, and delivered an oration in which he apostrophized the old warriors in part as follows:

> In their day the dispute was over the best way of defending liberty. It entered into no one's mind to deny that liberty is worth defending. Today the fight has shifted to a different terrain. The question no longer is, "How shall we best defend our liberties?" but "Are our liberties worth defending?" At least two strong parties contend that they are not.... Communism of the red flag and fascism of the black shirt agree in condemning both the men who defended Sumter and those who attacked it as men who fought in a vain quarrel.... They have asserted that freedom, except it be accomplished by food, clothing, and shelter, is not worth having.... This was never the creed of the South that went down in red ruin rather than tamely surrender her right to her own life. If it is the creed of the new South that has been built upon the ruins of the old, then that South is no true son of the old, but a bastard unworthy to bear out a great name.

More clearly than some of his contemporaries, Mr. Johnson has seen the dilemma into which the liberals are being

forced. But Virginius Dabney of Richmond ignores such dilemmas in his ambitious effort to equip modern liberalism with precedents and sanctions. His historical study, *Liberalism in the South*, attempts to give the complete anatomy of Southern liberalism from Revolutionary times to the present, and above all to argue the thesis that the liberalism of the nineteen-thirties is the legitimate child of the great past. Thus Thomas Jefferson becomes the spiritual grandfather of the swash-buckling idealists who want the government to guarantee everything from bank deposits to tonsillectomy for the mountain whites.

The difficulties of such a procedure are considerable. It is hard to get a definition of liberalism that will fit all the historic cases from the Declaration of Independence to the Gastonia riots. The years from 1820 to 1870, when the South was defending slavery and fighting from pillar to post to preserve its sectional independence, give Mr. Dabney some very uncomfortable moments, and he is never quite able to formulate a test by which one may recognize the genuine and absolute liberal. He can only lump together the political libertarians, the dissenters, the iconoclasts, and the social welfare workers, and hope that his definitions will stretch far enough to cover them.

The truth is that Mr. Dabney, for all his good will, writes not like a historian but like a doctrinaire who is trying to bolster his progressivism with an appeal to authority. If liberalism means tolerance, as Mr. Dabney and his contemporaries argue, why do Southern liberals dismiss the complaint of the Fundamentalists that the teaching of science is tolerated in Southern colleges, but not the teaching of religion? If it is liberal to agitate against tyranny, why is Mr. Dabney a better liberal than Huey Long, who rails against the money power? If it is liberal to limit freedom in the interest of the common good, what is wrong with the Prohibition amend-

ment, to which liberals object, and why is it more obnoxious than the laws for the regulation of industry, which they advocate? It is a queer sort of liberalism, after all, that proposes to abolish the evils of the chain-gang by putting everybody in chains. In the end it comes down to the old question of whose ox is gored. Mr. Dabney and the liberals would apparently sacrifice a good deal of freedom if they could obtain the kind of society they want. They do not want complete tolerance, but only the tolerance, or rather the preference, of the social devices that interest them. They are ready for the Leviathan government which will put an end once for all to the "dignity and worth of the individual" that Mr. Dabney keeps praising.

If that is the effect to which the Southern liberals have read Southern history, they have read it badly, with all the prejudice that they have attributed to their opponents. Their historical argument is either naïve or ignorant or sophistical, and in any case cries out for correction.

It is entirely true that if liberalism of the old and libertarian order had a native seat anywhere in the United States, that seat was the South. The South produced its Jefferson in the east and its Jackson in the west, and both were terrors to the reactionaries of their times. One was a free-thinker, a man of ideas that proved to be both revolutionary and fruitful. The other was a free-actor, a man who made Jeffersonian words into deeds, to the great affright of smug persons. Both sought to deliver men from tyrannies, whether political or commercial. The Jeffersonian philosophy was based on the conviction that the common man possesses an individual integrity which it is against the public interest to violate or despise, and that he can be trusted, in the long run, to shape his destiny wisely. But this common man was no merely generic creature—no "average man" of economic theory. He was a person of the living society that Jefferson and Jackson

knew—some Tom Jones of Virginia or Tennessee, a responsible individual with the stuff of God in him. Jeffersonian liberalism proposed to give Tom Jones his fair chance along with the "rich and well-born" on whom Hamilton wished to confer power. It was backed by a definite theory of government which in turn was fortified by practical economics. As for the government, it should be little, and that little was not to be trusted overmuch, since Jefferson understood how men allow institutions to become the instruments of oppression. The economics was based upon a theory of land and the cultivation of land. Jefferson was an agrarian, who thought that only a society which gave farmers a considerable preference could be expected to preserve its independence and economic health. Above all things Jefferson feared the Leviathan state and denounced the tendencies toward "consolidation" that Hamilton and Marshall were busily forwarding.

Liberals like Mr. Dabney pass lightly over such features of Jefferson's doctrine, and stress instead Jefferson's fight on the established church, his anti-slavery principles, his schemes for selective public education. Well may the Liberals thus discreetly shift the emphasis, for the Jefferson of political and economic theory is not the paternal ancestor of the modern Southern liberals, who worship "consolidation" and who are likely to think of farmers as "yokels" until they become proletarians and join a union. In fact, it can hardly be said that the Southern liberals have any ancestors in the South. Their intellectual pedigree, so far as it is American, must be traced out on the northern side of the Potomac. They will discover their family portraits among the New England humanitarians. Their contemporary friends and relations may be found among the Marxians and socialists of various faiths who inhabit the metropolitan East, and, to some extent, the "progressive" Middle West.

The South which lags behind the heart's desire of liberals

is really far more Jeffersonian than they are. It has never joined very heartily in the consolidating process by which the Jeffersonianism of the national body politic has been turned into a screen for a Hamiltonian state; its reluctance to do so has been embarrassing to Southern business men, who have been obliged to behave outwardly like Democrats, even when they hoped—and sometimes secretly worked—for the success of a Republican ticket. The South's "lag" is itself a Jeffersonian relic; basically, it is a temperamental distrust of the all-sufficiency of governmental mechanisms. The rights of man are not the political slogan they once were, but Southern politicians can testify as to the difficulty of passing and enforcing regulative laws in country districts, where the right of a man to own a dog or to let his cattle range takes precedence over "social awareness." And outside politics, the Southern temper is still more markedly Jeffersonian. A good deal of Southern kindliness, of genial and unselfconscious manners, of tolerance of abuses that in other sections would speedily be attacked by law, is probably due neither to aristocratic example or lazy good nature, but to an inherited notion of a democratic society where you hesitate to make the individual delinquencies of your neighbor your public business. Above all, despite the much-advertised industrialization of the South, the Southern people have not yet fully committed themselves to urban and industrial ways. They are still agrarian for the most part, and often they are agrarian in a very old-fashioned way.

But though the liberalism of Jefferson won an early triumph in the South and has kept its hold fairly well, history requires some important exceptions to be made. Men like Calhoun, who had grown up in the Jeffersonian tradition, discovered that it would not fit all new contingencies. The democratic principle, as they conceived it and the South understood it, had no meaning apart from a society that could make it work. To

them it seemed that such a society must be agrarian; they had no faith that democracy could survive in an industrial regime, such as was beginning to develop at the North, and which was, furthermore, a menace to Southern interests. The agrarian composition of Southern society included the institution of Negro slavery, which the North now began to attack, using the very equalitarian arguments that Jefferson had once fostered. Slavery, which ought to have remained a minor issue, was forced into major prominence, and Calhoun's general defense of agrarian democracy became, under stress, a rationalization of the economic sectionalism of the South and a defense of its "peculiar institution."

The difficulty was with equalitarianism itself, and Calhoun therefore directed a drastic criticism against it. Liberty and equality were united, he said, but it was wrong to think that "they are so intimately united that liberty cannot be perfect without perfect equality." And "to make equality of *condition* essential to liberty would be to destroy both liberty and progress." Such a view could lead only to the "tyranny of majorities" and in the end to the oppression of the South and the obliteration of Southern institutions. As for the Negroes, their case seemed insoluble except on a realistic basis. No matter what fine theories there might be about the inalienable rights of man, the Negroes were in the South, their rights had already been alienated, and no Southerner could conceive that black slaves could be changed overnight into high-minded Jeffersonian democrats. Olmsted, in his famous journeys into the back-country, found many "anti-slavery" Southerners, but all said, in effect, "What can be done with the Negroes, if they *are* freed?"

Under Calhoun's leadership the South therefore abandoned the extreme equalitarian features of early Jeffersonian doctrine. Unfortunately for realistic Southerners, their Northern brethren insisted on a thoroughly romantic application of

Jeffersonian equalitarianism, and added to it (as if to parallel the South's paradoxical defense of slavery) their own paradox of a glorified Federal union, which they did not concede would be in the least oppressive to the liberties of white Southerners or specially partial to the "peculiar institutions" of the North.

The war that followed was thus a struggle between two kinds of liberalism. The romantic liberalism of the North won, at least to the extent of foiling secession and freeing the Negro. But having won their victory, the Northerners found themselves unable to solve the new problems that soon arose. That hard undertaking finally was left to the realistic Southerners. Although the Confederacy had failed, the mutual interests of the Southern states were as strongly marked as ever. Southerners had surrendered their arms, but not their convictions, and these were applied to the difficult tasks of reconstruction. In the end the South remained more determined than ever before in its economic and cultural sectionalism.

When the carpet-bag governments had finally been expelled, the South turned naturally to its old leaders. For about twenty years the governments of the Southern states were in the hands of ex-Confederates, who occupied themselves with straightening up the mess. Few state governments, before or since, have been more economical or honest. They did their work well, but the time came when the human tendency of possessiveness asserted itself a little too overbearingly. The Confederate Brigadiers, as they were called, tended to become a clique. Somewhat too consciously they paraded their war records and neglected their political fences.

This was a lamentable error. War and reconstruction had brought all classes into a close working sympathy, but at this very time the Southern leaders allowed themselves to get out of touch with the rank and file. The "Bourbons" (to use the term of reproach that soon began to be put upon them) were at fault on two points: they neglected the old community of

interest between planter and yeoman farmer; and they also allied themselves with the new commercial interests that were beginning to enter the South. They became deeply involved in railroad promotion, factory building, all the forces represented in the Utopian vision of Henry Grady, who was urging Southerners to sow "towns and cities instead of theories and put business above politics." They had forgotten the farmers and small folk. But the farmers and small folk, destructively swept aside by the new commercialism, were in no mood to be forgotten. The Populist agitation that ran through the West like wildfire was also aflame in the South. The old leaders paid the penalty of a mistake that Jefferson would not have made. They were rudely dispossessed, and except for their later role of lobbyists and manipulators, they remained, as a class, in political exile.

In their place the new-style Jeffersonians vaulted into power. South Carolina banished the "Charleston snobs" and seated in the chair of Calhoun and Hampton a blunt upcountryman named Ben Tillman, who joined Bryan in calling on the Southern people to "throw off their bondage to a money power more insolent than the slave power." If this could happen in South Carolina, almost anything could happen in other states, and almost everything did happen. The revolt was not, however, a mere "putting of the bottom rail on top," or an elevation of the so-called "poor whites" to power, as it has been often represented. It had its gradations, typified in such diverse leaders as Ben Tillman in South Carolina and Bob Taylor in Tennessee; it was a general agrarian protest against the leadership of planters who had transferred their allegiance from farming interests to industrial interests that were hostile to the vast body of yeomanry, or heedless of them. Thus the continuity of the Southern political tradition was broken at a vital point. The Bourbons were making a surrender that had not been made at Appomattox. Even while they talked

sentimentally about the Old South, they were betraying it by admitting that the way of the Yankee, after all, might well be copied.[1]

The new-style Jeffersonians were Jeffersonians only by angry economic instinct. They were for the little fellow as opposed to the big fellow—dramatized in their minds as corporate business—and their tradition was agrarian still. But their political program, which originated largely in the progressive West, was hardly pure Jeffersonian, since it included such mixed features as government ownership of railways, free silver, the graduated income tax, the eight-hour day, the popular election of senators, the initiative and referendum. Soon it was plain that the agrarians of West and South were too determined and powerful to be put aside, and even Republican congresses were obliged to make reluctant concessions to them.

Meanwhile the Bourbons, having been kicked off the actual stage, began to speculate on the merits of a role behind the scenes. The Gilded Age had reigned in the North but hardly touched the South. There was no need of standing on the virtues of poverty when money—which, to be sure, was badly needed—might introduce the South to the age of industrial prosperity which seemed to be beckoning across the twilight of the dying nineteenth century. The drama now to be played had a catchy title, "Let the people rule!" But what really mattered was the box-office receipts. Money meant power—political power, without the responsibility and annoyance of

[1] In "From Tillman to Long: Some Striking Leaders of the Rural South," Daniel M. Robison points out that leadership in the antebellum South was not as completely "aristocratic" as it has been pictured; and that the postbellum leaders of the Tillman model were by no means mere uneducated demagogues and rabble-rousers. As the "Bourbons" rose to power, the "dirt farmers" lost their old spokesmen and had to find new ones.—*Journal of Southern History*, August, 1937.

holding office. So the new-style Jeffersonians went into political office, and the old-style Jeffersonians (now the industrial Bourbons) were quite satisfied to go into the banks and factories. The team-work between them was not always as perfect as the Bourbons could have wished, but it was good enough, as long as the money lasted, and the better as there was the more money.

The stage was now set for the period in which the South learned the full meaning of "rotten politics." In a series of political spasms, lasting roughly for twenty years, Southern states have ratified woman suffrage amendments but not child labor amendments; passed anti-evolution laws but supported huge educational projects; voted for prohibition but fought anti-lynching laws. This wild inconsistency, it is sometimes said, is due to "lack of leadership." That judgment is wrong. The inconsistency is due to irresponsible and often corrupt leadership. Behind the scenes the industrial Bourbons have applied a very simple but adequate technique for controlling legislatures that are nominally rural in composition. The industrial and business interests of the "New South" have swapped humanitarian improvements off for private concessions. Where their private interests were involved, they have ruled; where they were indifferent, they have let their bought legislatures flounder. They have been glad to welcome humanitarian improvements, since these have offered a respectable screen for their own operations.

The Southern liberals of the new school, no doubt innocently enough, have furnished the screen. They entered upon Southern history at approximately the same moment that the Bourbons made the decision to become industrialists. The defection of the Bourbons had in it at least the excuse of self-preservation. Bereft of their lands and ruined by war, they were persuaded to think that industrialism offered a way out. For the first time, their eyes were opened to "natural

resources" that meant dividends and bank accounts. But the liberals, with no such excuse, were attracted to the cultural by-products and social devices which seemed to go along with the Northern model of civilization. The South suddenly looked shabby to them, and the North glittered. So they surrendered, and their surrender was far more abject than that of the planter-industrialists, some of whom secretly hoped to revenge themselves on the Yankees by a financial flank attack. For the surrender of the liberals, made, it seems, without a quiver of concern as to the virtue of the institutions they were abandoning, was a surrender of the spirit, a recantation made by converts to a new religion. Perhaps they were tired of all the old talk about the war. Their fatigue, if it was such, had important results. At or about 1900, when the liberals began to speak up, the real conquest of the South by the North finally got under way.

The new Southern liberals were generally educators, like Edwin A. Alderman, or journalists, like Walter Hines Page. There were a few political leaders like Aycock of North Carolina, but only a few. Some, like Seaman A. Knapp, were interested in the improvement of agriculture. But most of the liberals had an institutional and humanitarian program. They sought to build up a progressive school system, to reëstablish and create state universities, to improve the condition of the poor by campaigns against hookworm and pellagra. Many of their activities in these fields were genuinely philanthropic and have resulted in clear gains. But their own enthusiasm, whetted by the conservative opposition they encountered, led them from institutional reforms to general social programs, and they soon found themselves committed to the ambitious task of liberalizing the South from top to bottom. What they were attempting to do, and the spirit in which they worked, can best be realized by an examination of the career of Walter Hines Page.

Page came of good middle-class North Carolina stock. His people were Whigs before the war, and were only distantly sympathetic toward the Confederate cause. Page himself remembered the war as a time of pain rather than of glory, and looked on the Confederacy as a foolish mistake which the South ought to forget with all speed. For a boy of those turbulent times, his education was excellent. He studied at Trinity and Randolph-Macon and later specialized in Greek under Basil Gildersleeve, the great classical scholar. But Gildersleeve's classicism did not "take" with Page. Some restless impulse drove him far afield. Before he was twenty-five (to quote one of his biographers) Page "had outgrown any Southern particularism with which he started life. He no longer found his country exclusively South of the Potomac; he had made his own the West, the North—New York, Chicago, Denver, as well as Atlanta and Raleigh."

Out of the detachment generated by this roving experience doubtless came Page's great impatience with his native North Carolina. His early efforts, as a young journalist, to make over North Carolina on the progressive plan met with little encouragement. He moved North, won a high editorial position, and continued the fight from a distance. Through his own articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *World's Work* and through the contributions he inspired from others, Page conducted a strenuous and brilliant agitation for the liberal cause. Among the young men of the post-bellum generation he succeeded in driving home the idea that the South must turn its back on the past and build its future in progressive terms. He backed up his agitation by keeping in close touch with leaders like Aycock, who were foci of local persuasion, and by his personal influence with Northern philanthropists who had money to give away. The Hookworm Commission, the General Education Board, the Farm Demonstration work of Seaman A. Knapp were spheres of influence in which Page's hand was

felt, though I believe he originated none of these agencies of liberal reform.

On the negative side, Page's doctrine contained some irritating critical features which gave him no end of trouble. In his propaganda novel, *The Southerner*, the South to which the young reformer comes home, after going to college in the East, is depicted as a dirty and ramshackle land, governed by a hidebound aristocracy that dwells in the past, hostile to intellectual culture, demagogue-ridden, heedless of the essentials of democratic progress. It is a stifling atmosphere, to which a native son can make only a few affectionate concessions. And it is made to appear in disadvantageous contrast to the atmosphere of free and expansive culture, untinged with sectionalism, that is represented as flourishing at the North.

The novel might be viewed as a dramatic over-statement of Page's discontent, were it not for the fact that Page never greatly revised his criticism. He never ceased to poke fun at the "Mummies" and to pooh-pooh the three Ghosts that he said were strangling the South: "The Ghost of the Confederate Dead, the Ghost of religious orthodoxy, the Ghost of Negro domination." Although he learned finally to use more persuasion than reproof, he never swerved from his view that Southerners must repudiate the quarter-century of history from 1850 to 1875. Like Virginius Dabney in the nineteen-thirties Page professed to go back to the Jeffersonian past for his definition of the Southern tradition. But though his esteem for Jefferson and for his native South was genuine, his Jeffersonianism composed the decorations and not the central fabric of his creed, which had natural affiliations with the progressivism of Roosevelt and Wilson. It was nineteenth-century idealism, which praised Arnold's "sweetness and light" without much understanding, and looked to science and culture as the deliverers of mankind, perfectly certain that industrial prosperity would be the foundation of a great,

a strenuous democratic civilization. For the principle of "consolidation" that would have terrified Jefferson and his followers, Page had neither fear nor criticism. His love of the South was philanthropic rather than comradely. What Page really liked most was the sense of power and the feel of moving in the great world of notabilities. It was enchanting to be at the center of the world's doings. It was thrilling to be on the side of angels and move millions of dollars in the cause of progress. When the country newspaper in the old home town rebuked Page for one of his editorial criticisms of the South, it was flattering to recall that no less a person than James Bryce had complimented him on the editorial in question. The tendency is human: in Page, as in his successors, it epitomizes the tragedy of the progressive who cannot rise above his origins without becoming an exile or a snob.

Page's positive program for the South reduces to two cardinal tenets: industry and public education. In 1902 he wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly:*

> There are two great constructive forces. The first is industry, which has already put the essential power in the hands of a class of men that give mobility to social life and opportunity to them that can take it. This industrial development would finally work out the inherent democratic tendency of the people, if no other force were brought into play. . . . The other native force that frankly recognizes the arrested development of the people and is taking hold of the problem of their natural growth is the new impulse in public education. This is native; ... this is nothing different from Jefferson's creed and plan.... In the presence of this revolutionary force, doubt about the democratic essence of Southern civilization falls away. Beside this, all other influences except the forward push of industrial life count for nothing.

The naïve optimism of such statements should not be too rudely scorned. Page was no philosopher-economist, but a journalist and promoter who was taken in by the half-baked

idealisms of the first Rooseveltian period. The soul of Page was charmed by precisely the same phenomena that harrowed and disturbed the soul of Henry Adams. He was a man of his day, and the greatest charge to be brought against him is the foolhardiness, amounting at times to a kind of liberal bigotry, with which he used his influence. It was ignorance, no doubt, that made Page assume that the modern program of universal compulsory education was identical with Jefferson's old scheme for selective education. It was something worse than ignorance that made him assume that Southern notions of life, good up to 1850, needed only to be swapped off for the opposing Northern notions, if the New Jerusalem were to be entered. In retrospect, the incompleteness of Page's program makes his rashness appear the more shocking. It was bad enough to imagine that an importation of industrialism, plus a modern school system, was enough to make the South a paradise; but it was shallow foolhardiness to jeer at the three "ghosts" of the Confederacy, of Negro domination, of religious orthodoxy, without stopping to ask whether those three phenomena, that lay at the heart of all Southern problems, could wisely and safely be hooted out of existence.

What America needed, at the turn of the century, to set off against the tendencies that were leading the country straight into over-industrialization and social degeneracy, was the strengthening of the conservative culture of the South, to the virtues of which Page and his followers were blind. An opposition South, growing from within and on its own terms, might conceivably have checked the wild rush to ruin. The tragedy of Page's career is that, with the best intentions in the world, he obstructed the growth of such a South. He brought the old tradition into a discredit that it never deserved. The substitute tradition that he offered, whatever its merits elsewhere, proved to be as empty culturally as it was vulgar in its crass acquisitiveness.

Southern liberals of the Page school met strenuous opposition at first. The instinct of conservative Southerners was against the liberal program, but their appeal to sectional loyalty, still couched in the vocabulary of war and reconstruction, was less than adequate to meet the new situation. Page and his colleagues had a fresh vocabulary, and the men of the old school, unable to think in the social and economic terms that would have offered a sound opposition, were gradually confounded by sheer glibness. They were made to appear hopeless diehards, standing out against the onward rush of history. Besides, the new policy developed a political value. Both the practical politicians (who were being rapidly converted from Populist-Democratic prophets into machine bosses) and the politico-business group were quick to see the possibilities of covert aggrandizement in the liberal program. Because it involved vast increases in taxation and the expenditure of large sums of money from state treasuries, it provided the sinews of war for the chests of political factions. It was clear as day how and why the poor might be flattered, so that thrift would follow fawning. Under the new motivation, the industrialists were no longer greedy and predatory trusts, but the beneficent producers of wealth which would be the material basis of culture. This was a flattering unction to lay to the souls of tobacco companies, steel works, lumber and mining corporations, textile mills, bottlers of patent drinks, coffee curers, and securities venders, who, under liberal auspices, began the large-scale exploitation of the physical and human resources of the South. Offstage the liberals and the chambers of commerce shook hands over the prostrate body of the Old South; and out in front the political Punch and Judy show went on to the old tune of "Let the people rule."

After twenty years of such activity, the liberal program, though hampered at every turn by the innate conservatism of the South, had made substantial gains, especially in states like

Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. In 1926 Edwin Mims could say with real assurance, in *The Advancing South,* that the Dayton episode was unrepresentative of the progressive South that was growing in strength every day. The Dayton trial in fact played into the hands of the liberals, for now in one great dramatic instance, soon to be followed by the Gastonia troubles, the Harlan county disorders, and the Scottsboro case, the poorly led conservative elements were put in the wrong and made to feel the brunt of metropolitan, even of world, disapproval. Young Southerners who had been brought up under the new public education were now predisposed to accept the liberal interpretation of the issues raised by a long series of crises. It was not merely that they were uninstructed in the Southern past, or had been taught the past out of textbooks colored with Northern views; but they had been fully exposed to all the loose precepts of modernism and were inclined to accept without question its fashionable notions. As a matter of course they believed that culture comes out of books; that wealth is the road to success and is to be achieved only by industrial expansion; that religion is a silly fable, or at best a loose rationalization of Christianity in terms of sociology; that progress is real and depends on science; that beauty is better than morality; that politics is unimportant; that education really educates. Everybody, it seemed, was shouting about the backwardness of the South. The bustle of the rising Southern cities and the disadvantaged condition of the farmer confirmed them in disrespect for the old agrarian culture. If they needed any further confirmation, it might be had from the writings of the new school of Southern novelists. In the cynical hauteur of Cabell, the acerbity of Frances Newman, the satire of T. S. Stribling, or the more reserved and plaintive condemnations of Ellen Glasgow they could learn the lesson of condescension. If the process had continued without abatement, it is possible that the liberals

would have succeeded in making the South, to all outward appearance, as good a copy of Northern civilization as the somewhat rebellious materials would allow.

But the liberal position was never as strong as it seemed to be, and the economic crisis of the nineteen-thirties made plain what its weaknesses are. The Southern liberals have never gone before the people as a political party, but have solicited support where they could get it and brought a quiet pressure where it would count. Their activity has been detached and channelized in the institutions through which they hoped to affect Southern life. It has depended upon a full and free supply of money from private or public sources. In the crisis of the great depression, when money was not easily obtainable, their situation became precarious. Philanthropists gave fewer subsidies for the expansion of liberal projects. State treasuries were discovered empty, or worse than empty, and appropriations were cut or cancelled. The alliance between the politico-business man and the politico-liberal fell apart before the drastic necessity of expense reductions. The menacing protests of the farmer shouted down the old liberal pleas for culture. The theory of large-scale public education was itself subjected to savage scrutiny. Teachers went unpaid, and the public school systems of several states all but collapsed. Institutions like the University of North Carolina had to submit to financial amputations. County demonstration agents were discharged. Normal and technical schools were abolished or curtailed.

Evidently the liberal doctrine of education had penetrated only skin-deep, for legislatures and county courts everywhere struck first of all at the educational system. In their eyes it is a luxury—a "something fancy" with which they were persuaded to primp themselves in boom days, and not a prime necessity. On the other hand, nothing was more astonishing than the way in which state highway departments refused to

be liquidated. Their power remained unshaken, for the simple reason that the corruptions of the industrial invasion inevitably put comfortable locomotion far ahead of intellectual culture. The liberal axiom that intellectual culture is an inherent property of industrialization failed badly under its first severe test.

More than this, Southerners are beginning to associate the liberal program with the tax burden under which they groan. Liberal projects have been used as the mask for the operations of the political machines that have flourished in nearly every Southern state. The great sums accumulated for roads and schools have also furnished the means for feathering the nests of grafters and for debauching legislatures. There is hardly a Southern state that has not been looted more effectively than in carpetbagger times. The staggering figures of treasury deficits and bonded debts tell the citizens of the South that the years of liberal progress have been also years of financial madness and pillage.

Thus the political and public associations of the liberals are none too savory, and their private associations are not much better. Their old friends, the industrialists, are often found out of a proper relation to the cause. Some of them are bank presidents, whose laurels have withered. Others are owners of mills whose closing has rendered cities prostrate, or of mines where labor is arrayed against capital. Or they belong to chambers of commerce whose booster language is less persuasive than of old. But the agricultural South, which the liberals despised or patronized with uplift programs, is again feeling its strength. It is proceeding to ask the liberals the hard questions that should have been put to them twenty-five years ago.

Under such pressure the liberals must make a difficult choice. It would have had to be made, soon or late, anyway. But now the sudden advent of industrial codes which wipe out

child labor and cheap labor, and threaten at one stroke to abolish the time-honored differential between white and black labor, rubs hard on all the old Southern sore places. The Scottsboro case and other cases less celebrated have furnished a series of irritants that combine with the pressure of the uniform wage rules to make race relations more disordered, or at least more dangerous potentially, than at any time since the seventies. And towering over all is the new doctrine of national self-sufficiency, which, if carried out, may ruin the South's export trade in cotton and tobacco and reduce the Southern States to the condition of pensioners upon a socialized America.

Compromise is less easy than of old, the questions will not wait, the choice must be made. Clearly it lies between becoming more liberal or more conservative. If the liberals go with the radical party, they will have to advocate, or seem to advocate, ideas that in the past have been peculiarly abhorrent to the South as a section. For example, they must favor a Federal Union more gigantically centralized than ever and more forbidding in its attitude toward private initiative; and, along with this Union, a dispensation that will enforce tenets of a decidedly socialistic cast: science to the limit, antagonism to all but the most diluted forms of religion, and equality for the Negro—a full equality that ultimately will go far beyond suffrage reforms and the destruction of such discriminations as now appear in Jim Crow laws and bi-racial school arrangements.

Entirely aside from the merits or demerits of such a program, it is certain that liberals who make the extreme choice will face the possibility of an isolation much greater than they now labor under. Of course, they will be alienated still further from conservative groups of every persuasion, whether chamber of commerce boosters and industrialists, or rural folk, or varying degrees of traditionalists; but they will also lose the

support of the more or less liberal groups who fear that their own moderate programs will be endangered by radical action. These groups will be driven into the conservative camp. Furthermore, a radical program, even if it should gather strength, must inevitably have the effect of strongly renewing the South's old sectionalism. In any event the radical view can hardly achieve a peaceful victory. The three Ghosts that Page feared have never ceased to walk; they need but little encouragement to become the hard actualities of a period of violence.

If the liberals shrink from this extremity, they may choose to strengthen the inclination within their ranks to readjust their ideas in the light of the tradition they once sought to overthrow. The South can ill afford to lose whatever good things they may have to offer; it is not, after all, disposed to play the coward before its problems. But the South of the nineteen-thirties, stirred to a new selfconsciousness by the turn of events and by the proddings of a new school of writers and social students who are free of the old sense of inferiority, is not the inert South of twenty or even ten years ago. It is beginning to ask its saviors to mix a little local originality with their statesmanship, and, if they insist on being humanitarian, at least to base their humanitarianism on a foundation nearer home than the *New Republic*.

The liberals can serve this South if their intelligence achieves a natural association with the sources of feeling which, however blindly and confusedly, have kept alive in the South a sense of civilization, its own and not another's, which the decay of industrial capitalism makes it timely to encourage. The Southern liberals, in short, may escape their dilemma by becoming more Southern.

XIV. Howard Odum and the Sociological Proteus

"At midday Proteus rose from the sea, and slept in the shade of the rocks, with the monsters of the deep lying around him. Any one wishing to learn futurity from him was obliged to catch hold of him at that time: as soon as he was seized, he assumed every possible shape, in order to escape the necessity of prophesying, but whenever he saw that his endeavours were of no avail, he resumed his usual form, and told the truth."—Blakeney's *Smaller Classical Dictionary.*

Sociology is a popular method of truth-seeking today. And yet one would think it an unfavorable time for sociologizing. The fundamentals of sociology have much to do with the study of primitive and stable forms of society. Our society is changing so rapidly that one can hardly find in it the moment of repose when just observations can be made. The sociological truth-seeker is like the man in the old Greek fable who comes to ask questions of Proteus. He must know what grip to use, and must hold on firmly through all manner of transformations. Then at last he may come upon some Protean wisdom, ancient as the sea.

A Southern sociologist like Arthur Raper, the author of *Preface to Peasantry,* obviously did not hold Proteus long enough. As soon as the old man of the sea took on an African cast, and said something about farm ownership for Negro tenants, Mr. Raper let go, and so was greatly deceived. That is no way to get an answer to the famous question: "Is it true

what they say about Dixie?" But the militant school of sociologists, to which Mr. Raper belongs, are generally content with easy answers.

The moderate school of Southern sociologists have chosen the most difficult and trying way to get an answer. They have been at grips with Proteus for a good many years, and at last, in Howard Odum's *Southern Regions*, they have given the public an opportunity to know what look into Southern futurity they have obtained. The book has been widely and favorably reviewed, though not, I think, always with full understanding of what it signifies. It is the text here for a discussion of a sociologist, or a group of sociologists, who can be studied in broad contrast to Mr. Raper. There is no sheer fanaticism here, no special pleading, no carelessness in handling facts. Rather there is the tortoise-like plodding that we expect of a conscientious social scientist. For we do not want the Southern sociologist to be a volatile and cunning Br'er Rabbit. We prefer him to be a Br'er Turtle, even if he does not arrive with utmost briskness.

The book bears Mr. Odum's name, and I am led to suppose, from the peculiar rhetoric recognizable on many a page as belonging to Mr. Odum's very personal prose style, that he is the author of the greater part of the textual wording. But the book represents the concerted effort of many hands and heads. *Southern Regions* appears under the sponsorship of the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council. It is a part of a general regional study which has been going on for some time and which has necessitated large and complicated tasks of research. The informed reader of Mr. Odum's acknowledgments recognizes, as belonging to the advisory and working staff, the names of various eminent social scientists: Rupert Vance, author of *Human Geography of the South;* T. J. Woofter, population expert; S. H. Hobbs, Jr., of North Carolina; Katharine Jocher, of *Social Forces;*

George Fort Milton, historian and newspaper editor; E. W. Knight, specialist in education; and more than fifty others. I take it that these people were, in effect, collaborators in the project. To them and their assistants we owe the 300 or more maps and charts contained in the volume, and much other material. But besides this single book we are to understand that such separate studies as *The South Looks at Its Past,* by A. M. Arnett and Benjamin B. Kendrick, and other books still to be issued, are to be considered related parts of the general project.

In the background, too, we should not fail to visualize the aggressive leadership of North Carolina in the South during recent years, with the university as a center of radiation for ideas that began by being liberal and have swung more and more toward the Left position of Southern thought. We should not forget the vigorous press of the university and the symposium, *Culture in the South,* edited by W. T. Couch, the director of the press. And beyond all these are the numerous productions of many individual authors, not the least fecund of whom has been Mr. Odum himself.

There are serious criticisms which might be brought against the North Carolina school, but they would not be appropriate here. *Southern Regions* is, in fact, surprisingly free from the agitating and crusading spirit that has animated some of the North Carolinians. No pains have been spared to make it judicious and temperate. It must be taken as the realization of an ambitious design to utilize the complete resources of social science in drawing a picture, in full perspective, of the Southern situation. For the South it proposes to do, perhaps with greater clarity and point, what *Recent Social Trends* aimed to do for the nation. Inevitably it has greater point because in the South a little margin of change, one way or the other, may spell more tragic defeat or more encouraging victory than in any other region. The pages of this book are

calm, but it takes only a little reading between the lines to sense an air of tension and indeed desperation. Destiny is long overdue in the South. Its decision for better or for worse hangs by a thread. Mr. Odum and his collaborators would forestall the choice of emotionalism or political expediency by offering the opportunity of rational action before it is too late—before the Stowes, Lincolns, and John Browns of 1937, and their Southern antagonists, have made rational action difficult. Certainly they are making it hard for any responsible American, with this book before him, to say, as might have been said at some times in the past, that he would have chosen differently for the South if he had been better informed.

Unlike the elusive Mr. Raper, Mr. Odum makes it plain, even to the point of laboriousness, what his approach to the general problem is and what his standards of measurement are. There is comparatively little shifting about between pragmatic and humanitarian points of view. Basic to the study (as Mr. Odum is fond of saying) is an elaborate conception of regionalism, founded chiefly upon cultural, economic, and physiographic data. The South is no longer to be considered a solid entity embracing the states which seceded and their border sisters. The states of the Southwest have differentiated themselves off into a new region. The Old South has thus split, Mr. Odum holds, into a Southeast and a Southwest. These are two of the six "major" regions of the United States, the others being the Northeast, the Middle States, the Northwest, and the Far West. It is also "basic" to Mr. Odum's conception that regionalism is here to stay, as an increasingly important factor in government and economics.

In a lengthy chapter entitled "A New Regional Analysis: Southern Regions in the National Picture," Mr. Odum distinguishes carefully, almost pleadingly, between the new regionalism and the old sectionalism. National culture and regional culture, he holds, are complementary and not antago-

nistic: "For just as it is not possible to understand or plan for the next period of American development without a vivid sensing of great regional differences, so it is not possible to attain superior regional achievements without a very realistic sensing of national unity and culture." This rather loving and pliable version of regionalism is necessary, as will appear later, to certain solutions of regional problems advocated in this book. It invites and deserves discussion; but I can observe at this point only that it contains more of romanticism than realism.

Next, the Southeast is not only one region, but many regions, or subregions. The Southeast is clearly a major region, but one does not get a complete picture of it until he has delimited and described the various subregions. In fact, the great diversity of the Southeast, in topography, folk-culture, and economic predilection is one of the principal marks that distinguish it from other major regions.

For both the major regions and the subregions (though more often for the former) Mr. Odum gives the "indices" by which he arrives at his judgment. There is no hidden bias to search out, as in Mr. Raper's *Preface to Peasantry*. We may or may not accept Mr. Odum's "indices," but at any rate they are honestly and openly set forth. For the most part they are comparisons between the Southeast and other regions in items where statistics are obtainable: ownership of automobiles, tax rates, property values, church membership, industrial and agricultural production, income and wages, and countless other things.

But Mr. Odum, who is surely the most amiable and least dogmatic of sociologists, is quick to say that such indices are to be scanned mainly for purposes of "differentiation." They should not imply "imitation, equalization, or standardization." There are other, more intangible values that no index can measure. There is a "quality civilization" to be sought

out in a quantity world. "The mechanized perfections of light and heat," he writes, "moving pictures, and automobiles of the new industrial economy, may not rank higher than the vigorous satisfaction of the mountain folk, deep in the living experience of their music and liberty." The general social inventory, if it rests merely upon "arbitrary comparative indices," may "fall short of either scientific accuracy or practical application to living society."

The Southern picture that emerges slowly from the mass of assembled details is in outline familiar. *Southern Regions* confirms what we already knew or guessed was true. The South is an overwhelmingly, invincibly agrarian area, caught helplessly between its own dimly understood and still living past and the demands of an assertive, recklessly exploitative nation that, under Northeastern leadership, has committed itself rather deeply to an urban, industrial vision of the future. This is the way Mr. Odum sums it up: "As to resources—superabundance; as to science, skills, technology, organization—deficiency; as to general economy—waste; as to culture—richness, with immaturity and multiple handicaps; as to trends—hesitancy and relative retrogression in many aspects of culture."

All this has often been said before, sometimes in scornful depreciation, sometimes in defense. But *Southern Regions* performs the great service of completing and extending the outline, or even of establishing it where it depended on opinion and conjecture. It may be true that sociology here, as in many another case, simply proves what common-sense persons already knew. But in our violently statistical, researching age, it is extremely useful to have on hand several bales of data to feed the asses. Those particular asses who have argued that the South has refused to put itself in order only because of some blind and wicked infatuation with false gods are here refuted. They will find in *Southern Regions* all the proof they

want, gathered by forward-looking scientists, that their diagnosis is ridiculously wrong.

But what will now happen to their vituperative vocabulary? You cannot accuse a page of statistics of being nostalgic. There is no Jahveh-worship in a chart of taxation figures. It is impossible to charge Mr. Odum with renewing the War Between the States when he points out that the per capita farm income for New York state in 1929 was $493, while in Tennessee it was $137. Yet no doubt the South-baiters will have a verbal shillalah ready. They will probably call Mr. Odum a Fascist!

Among the many indices of measurement, I think by far the most enlightening are those which emphasize what Mr. Odum calls "deficiency." He does not add, as some Southerners would want to add, that this deficiency also means dependency, almost to the point of enslavement. He also neglects to point out that the disparity between the South and other regions (particularly the Northeast) shows no tendency to lessen. One can hardly go through the book, however, without getting the impression that the relative material condition of the South today may be a good deal worse than it was in 1900, when the region had had time to recover from war and reconstruction and had not yet entered fully upon the program of industrialization and progress then being urged upon it by Walter H. Page and Henry Grady. It is a fault in Mr. Odum's indices that they do not clearly set up such long-range comparisons. Nevertheless, it can definitely be said that after a full generation of the Grady-Page program the South is still tragically deficient in the very blessings that these enthusiastic prophets guaranteed as the result of their program.

Occasionally Mr. Odum summarizes parts of his deficiency studies. By way of opening the exhibit I quote from one of his summaries:

Some of the actual measures of this waste and lack of technology are found in deficiency indices, such as the lowest per capita farm income, the lowest income per worker, the lowest return per unit of horse power, the lowest ratio of income from livestock production, the lowest per capita purebred livestock, the lowest production of milk and dairy products, a low ratio of pasture land, a low carrying capacity for pasture lands.... There has been a decrease in the last decade of the number of most livestock. There is a low evaluation of livestock and a low evaluation of their products.

But the story of Southern deficiency means something more than "waste and lack of technology." Not even the finest technology, not the most earnest conservation can save a region from ruinous exploitation at the hands of a political-economic imperialism such as the South has had to face. In my opinion, the following miscellaneous statistics are a measure of such exploitation fully as much as of Southern waste and inexpertness.

In ratio of tenancy to ownership, nine Southern states rank in the fourth, or heaviest, quartile; two other Southern states rank in the third quartile. And Southern tenancy has been on the increase.

Nine of the Southern states rank lowest in land value in the Union. The lowest land value in tenant-operated farms is in the South.

The density of population is about 60 to the square mile in the South as compared to 80 and over in the Northeastern and Middle States. This figure has great significance in any interpretation of the agrarian South, for its bearing on taxation and government, if for no other reason.

The average gross income per farm, in 1924-28, was under $1500 a year in all Southern states except Florida, Texas, and Oklahoma. In New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin the income was $2000 to $3000 a year.

Wages average about one third less in the Southeast than

in the Northeast, and are more than one third less than in the Middle States.

In 1929 there were less than 175 motor cars per 1000 inhabitants in all Southern states except Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida, as compared with 175 to 225 in the Northeast and over 275 in the Middle West.

The average total acreage per farm in the Southeast is the smallest in the country: under 75 acres. In the Middle West it is 300 and over. The Southeast has 175 million acres in farm lands as compared with 60 million in the Northeast.

The South lies in the belt of the most serious erosion. Of the nation's total of 150 million eroded acres, 97 million are in the South.

The Southeast buys 59.5 per cent of all the fertilizer bought in the nation. The Northeast buys 12.3 per cent; the Middle States 19.8 per cent.

The agricultural expenses of the Southeast are distributed in about the following proportion: for fertilizer, 41 per cent; for feed, 27 per cent; for labor, 32 per cent. In the rest of the United States the distribution is: for fertilizer, 6.3 per cent; for feed, 46.4 per cent; for labor, 47.3 per cent.

Less than ten per cent of Southern farms use tractors.

The value of all farm property was under $5000 per farm in the Southeast as compared with $10,000 to $15,000 in New York State, and over $15,000 in much of the Middle West. The figures are for 1930.

To illustrate per capita farm income in 1929 the following figures may be selected: for the Southeast, $183; for the Northeast, $366; for the Middle States, $262; for Tennessee, $137; for Massachusetts, $898; for New York, $493.

Non-farm income makes a slightly better relative showing. Some figures are: for the Southeast, $535; for the Northeast, $683; for the Middle States, $854. Tennessee's per capita

non-farm income figures out as $529 in comparison with New York's $1417.

The average Federal income tax paid in the Southeast in 1928 was about half of the average tax paid in the Northeast.

In interstate migration since 1900 the heaviest net loss was in the South: 3,400,000. Mr. Odum makes the following comment upon this loss:

> Among these [migrating Southerners] was a large ratio of its best equipped workers, educators, and scientists. This is reflected in the negligible part which the South has in nearly all national organizations and agencies of science, education, and social welfare, and in positions of leadership in national affairs other than current politics. The measure of the region's leadership is considerably less than 5 per cent as compared with its approximately 21 per cent of population, 17 per cent of area, and 12 per cent of wealth. In the great majority of the dominant national groups the southern representation on the executive or controlling boards is negligible. *The same is true in most of the New Deal units of administration in contrast to the large representation in Congress.* [Italics are mine.]

In the greater part of the South more than 40 per cent of the population live on farms, as compared with less than 10 per cent in the Northeast (Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine excepted).

Only a complex description can make clear the extent of educational deficiencies and burdens. On top of the extra expense of its bi-racial school system, the South has "the largest proportion of children of school age to the total population alongside the smallest income and wealth with which to educate them. Thus the burden of supporting schools on a property tax in a poor state with a large ratio of children may be more than ten times as heavy as for a rich state with fewer children." Some figures will make the situation plain. Mississippi, with about 47 per cent of its population of school age in 1930, had 23.5 per cent of its total population in

school. Its per capita net income in 1929 was $32; its total expenditures per capita for schools in 1927-28 were $9.04; of all its income it spent 4 per cent on schools. New York, with about 34 per cent of its population of school age, had 19 per cent of its total population in school; had $506 per capita net income; spent $23.86 per capita of its total expenditures for schools, or 2.11 per cent of its total income.

To this melancholy contrast we might add a bit of interpretation by Rupert Vance: "For Mississippi to attain the national average in expenditures for educating her school children would require 99.3 per cent of all the present tax monies of the state."

The average annual teachers' salary in Georgia is reckoned at $546 as compared with California's $2,337.

The per capita total receipts of universities, colleges, and professional schools in Arkansas and Alabama (the two lowest states in the Union on this scale) were $1.31 and $1.95 respectively, in comparison with Connecticut's $9.08 and Massachusetts' $8.13 (the two highest states).

Mr. Odum sums this up by saying:

> The stark reality of regional dilemma here may be illustrated by a continuation of the educational picture in which the Southeast is shown to have increased its index of educational expenditures from something like 300 in 1900 to an analogous 6,000 in 1930, yet, in order to bring its standards up to the best of the nation, must double its current annual expenditures and approximate a third of its taxable income for education. More and still more grows the demand; less and still less seem the relative tangible liquid resources, under the present economy.

It is in such passages as the above that one catches the accents of desperation. For nearly a half century the South has been listening to progressive educationalists and trying to catch up in the educational race. It has made entirely creditable gains at a few points. But in general it seems farther behind than it was before 1860, when the South had already

founded almost as many permanent state universities and women's colleges as had been founded in *all* the rest of the nation. It has nearly exhausted itself to set up a modern educational establishment, and yet still it lags, and now sees, furthermore, the system built up at so much cost threatened by the general economic depletion.

But another, even sadder, tale of effort and exhaustion appears in the tables of tax increases, which have gone, not only to support schools, but to build roads and to finance larger and more modern forms of state and county government.

Southern states, which are at the bottom of the national list in income, in land values, in all sorts of other tangibles, are at the top of the list in tax increases since 1913. The ratios of increase for the six regions of the United States are as follows: Southeast, 307.5 per cent; Southwest, 281.9 per cent; Northeast, 222.3 per cent; Middle States, 232.4 per cent; Northwest, 203; Far West, 158.2. For some individual states, let North Carolina's 553.8 per cent tax increase be set alongside New York's 216.4 per cent; Mississippi's 411.4 beside Ohio's 212 per cent; South Carolina's 448.2 per cent beside North Dakota's 183.4 per cent.

With the tale of tax increase must go the tale of increase in the indebtedness of state governments. Four Southern states rank among the five highest in the nation in such indebtedness. The per capita indebtedness for the Southeast is $23.48 as compared with the Northeast's $15.98 and the Middle States' $11.44. In farm mortgages, however, the Southeast was less heavily loaded than some other regions. Nevertheless, mortgages belong in the debt picture. In a certain year one Southeastern Federal land bank owned over a million acres and operated four thousand farms in three Southeastern states.

The matter of mortgages suggests to us how incomplete the picture is unless we have figures to show the South's "unfavor-

able trade balance." I do not find such figures in this book. I find two sentences introduced to justify Mr. Odum's argument that a certain amount of large-scale industry is desirable. "The Southeast being a heavily loaded debtor region faces an unusually adverse trade balance," he writes. "It not only does not have adequate opportunity for earning, but its money, hard earned, flows out and out to enrich other regions, often contrary to its economic advantages and diminishing the income and purchasing power of the people." Elsewhere he speaks a little more vehemently of the Southern farmer's plight:

> How was he to pay debts which had more than doubled in an economy in which his income had been cut more than half? ... And all the while urban intellectuals demanding a "standard of living"... which required more and more outlay for automobiles, telephones, radios, and other technologies which had come to signify blanket indices of well-being.

It is a pity that Mr. Odum did not expand the point. It would be interesting to know how much of every Northeastern dollar expended in the South or for Southern produce flows back eventually into the Northeast; and how much of every Southern dollar (not only of the Southern farmer's dollar) goes Northeast without ever returning to the Southern purse.[1] It would round off the tale of deficiency to show how, while all but bankrupting itself in its effort to duplicate Northeastern material and cultural arrangements, the South was simultaneously making a heavy contribution to the Northeastern establishment. In the educational field, this would mean that North Carolina not only supported its own state schools and colleges (bi-racial and other duplicating establishments extra), but also assisted Harvard University to install its new house system, to say nothing of swelling the

[1] Such questions are discussed at considerable length by Webb, in *Divided We Stand* (1937).

Harvard endowment and doing its bit for Boston on the side. And what did fair Harvard and the state of Massachusetts contribute to North Carolina? Little, compared with what they took away. And what bore heavily on comparatively wealthy (as Southern states go) North Carolina meant extreme debility for comparatively poor Mississippi and Arkansas.

Yet I can well understand Mr. Odum's reluctance to go thoroughly into such questions. They raise the sectional issue in its most discouraging and angry form. And Mr. Odum wants to be amiable and politic. He is a regionalist, not a sectionalist. Very well, the tale is grievous enough without statistics written in blood. It is sufficiently emphatic to have evidence, from the "sampling" I have done, that expert students of a sociological condition, aiming at completeness and working in all honesty, have not been able to explain Southern "backwardness" merely as a product of social attitudes, environment, and traditions. Those have their due place, and it is an important place. But sociology is trafficking in dangerous nonsense unless, as in *Southern Regions,* it takes up the economic issue.

There is more, vastly more, in Mr. Odum's account to roll up the tale of Southern disadvantage. There is also much to say of possibilities, some few realized, others still far from realization. It all comes to this: the South's position, relative to other regions, is one of colonial degradation. In emphasizing that point, boldly and conclusively, Mr. Odum and his collaborators stand quite apart from some of their more partial contemporaries. They have met the test which distinguishes statecraft from charlatanry in the application of social science. By contrast, Arthur Raper of the militant school, debunkers like H. L. Mencken and Gerald Johnson, and puzzled liberals like Virginius Dabney have all miserably flunked the examination. These latter do not understand, or else willfully ignore, the first principles of consideration. They damn

the South for not repairing its deficiencies; and by way of a tonic they offer another swig of the patent medicine that has been costly without being curative. They do not know, or do not care to know, that the debtor South, already ravaged by its creditors, cannot, out of its limited substance, pay for modern improvements and at the same time maintain its creditors in luxury.

But how have Mr. Odum and his colleagues managed to grasp the first principles that eluded these other able heads? The answer is implicit in the title of the book: *Southern Regions*. Once Mr. Odum and his colleagues committed themselves to a regional study, once they recognized "the historical and theoretical significance of the region and of the power of the folk-regional society in modern culture," it was inevitable that their studies would bring them face to face with the South's historic difficulty—though of course it took some salty good sense and no little courage in the process. By a devious, perhaps an unnecessarily arduous, route they have arrived upon the ground where John C. Calhoun began to do some hard thinking about a century ago. Their program differs from Calhoun's, but the thesis in many ways is the same. The South, *because of* its regional differentiations, some of which are certainly valuable, is at a disadvantage, and so long as political and economic power dwells where it long has dwelt, it will continue to be at a disadvantage.

It is important to realize, as I think Mr. Odum does, that the regional differentiations are among the principal causes, if they alone are not the chief cause, of the disadvantage. But if you are an abstract nationalist, or, as folks long ago used to say, a leveller, you are certain to miss this point. If you look at New York and then look at Georgia, and see that the former is more or less orderly and shipshape after a modern manner, and that the latter is disorderly and shabby, after a strange mixture of modern and ancient manners, you will

never be able to conclude, unless you are a regionalist, that the disorderliness of Georgia is anything but a quaint or an annoying exhibition of human depravity. Depravity, I believe, was the chief text of Mr. Mencken's old pulpit thunderings against the South. It is also Mr. Raper's text, but he is, as Mr. Mencken really never was, an eager missionary, who will take his chances of getting into the cannibal pot if, with the Great White Father's bureaus at his back, he can briskly proselyte the Southern savages. In this connection, I recall the attempt of *The American Mercury*, some years ago, to determine the relative degree of "civilization" in the states of the Union by using indices somewhat like those in Mr. Odum's book. Of course the Southern states rated lowest in all those indices—such as schools and libraries—which connoted "civilization"; and highest in those—such as homicides and malaria—which connoted "barbarism." The findings merely confirmed the prevalent notion of some mysterious and innate depravity in the South. No attempt was made to establish regional groupings or to probe into the causes of regional differences. Nobody added up the figures and asked whether the remarkable surplus of libraries in the Northeast could possibly have anything to do with the lack of them in the Southeast. Nobody wondered whether a certain kind of valid cultural preference might be tied up with the economic unbalance: the kind of preference that would make a Georgia cracker want to spend an extra quarter on ammunition to shoot squirrels rather than on a copy of *The New Yorker*.

Surely the good sociologist must be a regionalist, and all the more so if he unites other social scientists under his banner and goes into action. Only through a regional study can he get at a culture from the inside. If he comes at it with loud talk about humanity and world progress, he is coming at it from the outside, he is a missionary and not a seeker after truth. The regional grip is the right one, and the only right

one, for the sociological Proteus. Held in that grip, Proteus ceases to bewilder and begins to say what is to be done in this or that agitated corner. And then one can also think, or begin to think, about that unholy mess of regions which is the world. It is greatly to the credit of Mr. Odum and his colleagues that they have kept a regional grip upon one of the most slippery of subjects.

Yet I should not want to over-emphasize their devotion to the economic side of Southern regional problems. On the whole *Southern Regions* does not seem to be grounded upon crass economic determinism. Mr. Odum does not say that everything will be perfect if only economic deficiencies may somehow be remedied. He does not say that the South ought to be made over into a North, or into a Nowhere. As a careful regionalist he can foresee obstacles to any such thoroughgoing transformation, and I gather that he would not be too forward about eliminating all those obstacles. He writes:

> The character and power of the total regional culture is, of course, the key to the whole problem of appraising and reintegrating the southern culture into the national unity... What is not measurable is the degree to which the present regional homogeneity, due to whatever factors of folk-regional forces, has become sufficiently stable to constitute itself a fixed culture nonassimilable and not adapted to the national mode of industry, commerce, and technology.

That is heavy language to say, as Stark Young said in *I'll Take My Stand,* that the South changing will still be the South. To supply the modern economic means of straightening-up Southern affairs will not necessarily imply that the South must adopt the attitudes that go with such economic means elsewhere. By present indications, Mr. Odum notes, "folkways of race, state, and sectional loyalties" may come nearer to "conditioning" the South, even a more modern South, than any other forces. Education, which is the most

powerful of "conditioning" forces, "reflects far more of the effect of politics, religion, and sectionalism than it appears as modifying influence upon them." Faculty members of Southern universities may have been trained in Eastern or Western institutions, may even themselves be non-Southern, yet they are more often "conditioned" by Southern culture than they modify it. The common school system, which has imitated the form and mechanics of the national system, does not appear to have much visible effect upon the Southern culture. Denominational colleges and some teacher-training institutions are citadels of sectional conservatism.

The strength and integrity of the southern culture have been more and more articulate as the ratio of southern men and women trained in other institutions and returning to major posts in southern colleges has increased to take the place of natives of other regions originally employed. This together with other factors, such as a revolt against industrialism, technology, and cities; the romanticizing of the old southern culture; the experience of northern capitalists in southern industry; the attempt of northern idealists and reformers to coerce the region; the experience of the Negro in the North and West; and a certain revivification of sectional antagonisms have contributed to an apparent solidifying of the regional culture.

Mr. Odum is certain that the Southern culture, far from being "decadent," is in reality to be called "immature." It has enormous vitality, even in those attitudes which sociologists call survivals: its ways of humor, its "stubborn bantering threats to outsiders," and various "defense mechanisms." Though a little vaguely, Mr. Odum suggests that the process of improving Southern conditions is not merely one of bringing the South "up" to modern standards, but of making modern standards worth acceptance by the South. He likes the "exuberant vigor" even of those whom the metropolitan press has rated as demagogues, and quotes, as a specimen voice of

the one and the many in the Southern regions, these words spoken in the United States Senate by the late Huey Long:

> I am not undertaking to answer the charge that I am ignorant. It is true. I am an ignorant man. I have had no college education. I have not even had a high school education. But the thing that takes me far in politics is that I do not have to color what comes into my mind and into my heart. I say it unvarnished. I say it without veneer. I have not the learning to do otherwise, and therefore my ignorance is often not detected. I know the hearts of the people because I have not colored my own. I know when I am right in my own conscience. I do not talk one way in the cloakroom and another way out here. I do not talk one way back there in the hills of Louisiana and another way here in the Senate. I have one language. Ignorant as it is, it is the universal language within the sphere in which I operate. Its simplicity gains pardon for my lack of letters and education.

Thus, in spite of much emphasis upon economics, *Southern Regions* is far from giving comfort to those who, like Arthur Raper, would make too simple prescriptions: who offer education to cure "ignorance" and "prejudice"; factories to cure poverty; and more and bigger laws, bureaus, and governments to do away with social "injustice." Confronted with a specific major problem, whether it be the handling of industry, the character of education, the race issue, the preservation of agriculture, Mr. Odum seems to insist that the particular problem cannot be dealt with in isolation from other problems. Furthermore, all such major problems from farm tenancy to political democracy are "bound up with the 'culture' or 'system' of economic and social ideologies and arrangements of the region." Mr. Odum holds that the strategy of "mass attack upon the culture of a whole region" is neither common sense nor science. Although he edges dangerously near to Mr. Raper's views when he says that the Negro's future is "an American problem of development and assimilation," he does not prescribe that the assimilation must be

Southern. There is little of Mr. Raper's bald equalitarianism. It is significant that the Negro problem does not rate a single specialized chapter in the book but is dealt with, as it arises, in connection with more general problems. To top all, we have this matter-of-fact statement: "Any realistic picture of the region or programs of action must assume the Negro to be exactly what he is in the regional fabric." There is to be no sociological wish-thinking.

At this point, however, it seems proper to ask who can speak authoritatively for the Southern Regional Study. For Rupert Vance, who has shared in the study, has made an entirely different interpretation. In a pamphlet, *The South and the Nation,* prepared by Mr. Vance on the basis of the Southern Regional Study, I find a paragraph of pure economic determinism:

> It is the belief of the Southern Regional Study that prejudices inherent in Southern culture will respond best to economic treatment. In so far as they are the products of fear, of ignorance, of the search for the scapegoats of misery, they are the products of poverty. To raise the economic conditions of the common men of the South, black and white, is to do the most possible to lessen hatred, prejudice, and conflict.

Here we are close to certain popular sociologisms, such as the myth that economic jealousy is the cause of lynching, or Mr. Raper's myth, in *Preface to Peasantry,* that Southern planters have oppressed the Negro because they had to find a scapegoat. But Mr. Vance's statement seems contrary both to the spirit and the general argument of *Southern Regions.* I have been unable to locate any specific passages in the book which might be taken as a foundation for this "belief." Possibly Mr. Vance is making some independent interpretation; possibly he is spreading out a little bait. But if the Southern Regional Committee do "believe" what Mr. Vance says they believe, they are going against the regionalism of *Southern*

Regions and are, in this respect, no more regional than the Atlanta office of the Standard Oil Company.

What futurity does the sociological Proteus foretell for the South? That appears, after 576 pages of shifting consideration, in the chapter entitled "Towards Regional Planning." Here we may see why Mr. Odum was so insistent, at the outset, that regionalism must be carefully distinguished from sectionalism. His proposals for reconstruction, which we may take to represent the official view of the Southern Regional Study, rest upon two assumptions: first, that the states of the South, or at least of the Southeast, can be persuaded to get together on a long-time, intra-Southeastern experiment in regional coöperation, which after an initial period of trial and study will finally begin to function, as a social plan, about 1950; and second, that the money needed for repairing Southern deficiencies can be obtained from outside the South, either through Federal appropriations, or business enterprise, or private benevolence. Or perhaps, if the fates are kind, from all three sources.

The two assumptions are bound closely together and have certain unexpressed negative features. The Southern get-together must not have any of the tone and look of the old Southern Confederacy; there must not be any "secesh" elements in it. The external assistance must not look to the nation like a piratical raid upon the Federal treasury, or to the South like some kind of humiliating almsgiving or bribery. It takes some delicate balancing and word-play to get all such difficulties skirted. Mr. Odum accomplishes it by his dogma that the nation and the regions are reciprocal aspects of the same good principle, non-conflicting, mutually supporting. The nation helps itself by helping the South. The South helps itself by being national-minded. A great deal of forbearance and patience is implied here—more than has so far been exhibited in American history. But Mr. Odum is hopeful.

Yet he is also a little fearful. There are those disturbing Texans who bumptiously declare that the Southwest is "free soil" commercially, not to be dictated to or planned for by anybody, outside its own chambers of commerce. Mr. Odum sweetly reminds these people that under the land rental scheme of the Triple-A, Texas received more than half of all that was paid to other states. There are also meddlesome persons from God knows where who want to foist off upon the South "immature experiments or inferior goods or adventurous misfits from the metropolis"; and there is a quarrelsome group of people who indulge in "intolerant reform propaganda" or put exaggerated hope in "humanism, technocracy, self-contained America . . . narrow regimentation . . . or in many of the New Deal plans which ignored regional reality." To such persons Mr. Odum gently remarks (I translate from the sociological) that they had better study regionalism. Last, there is the public suspicion of "national planning," "planned economy," and the like as smacking of Utopian idealism, radicalism, supertechnology, dictatorship, and sectional favoritism. He meets this suspicion by arguing that "social planning" is none of those things, but something entirely different.

On this last subject Mr. Odum is none too definite. Apparently social planning means that everybody will stop fighting, cheating, and vituperating and be a good Christian. It is not dictatorially imposed but calls for "cooperative and coordinated design of, for, and by all institutions and regions rather than by government alone through centralized autocracy." Seemingly that implies that social planning will be in large part voluntary and unofficial, looking to politics for final instrumentation rather than as a source of immediate action. The thing will work amiably and flexibly. It will have as its principle "a working equilibrium in the whole culture process and function." It proposes not to tear down the old

institutions forthwith, but to ease them painlessly through some orderly transitional process.

This is enchanting, but it is confusing. We can be sure of one thing only: that the transitional process is going to be extra- or super-political and will be in charge of social science. I interpret Mr. Odum's discourse here to mean that he will, as sociologist, commit himself to stating the major problems and to indicating how agencies may be set up for determining their solution; but that he will not say, dogmatically and immediately, what the solution is. Out of four principal "clusters of problems" he considers agriculture and its related problems as of first importance, and preparation for educational and technical leadership as of next importance. Presumably there will be a regional planning board which will do for the entire Southeast—or the South—about what the Tennessee Valley Authority does for the Valley. Through a technique of experimentation this board will demonstrate in selected areas what can be done, say, for the tenant farmer. It will also seek to coördinate the action of established governmental units, state and Federal, and of private agencies. Thus, by working on the lowest economic level it will provide a substantial basis for reform. But it will also work in the upper brackets. In higher education it will encourage regional institutional centers for the training of public servants and technologists and will provide for a pooling of educational resources and a sensible allocation of benevolences and Federal grants. The latter would be a welcome substitute for the present hit-or-miss system, whereby Southern colleges fight each other in the home section and then continue the fight abroad, in the waiting-rooms of Northeastern philanthropists. Above all, perhaps, the planning board will attend to the little matter of a proper "equalization" of Federal funds. The whole thing will work on a series of priority schedules. There will be no grandiose whooping it up and racing against time, but the

hope will be to dispose of the preliminary phases in two six-year periods, so that the South will be somewhat patched up and ready for serious planning by 1950. But meanwhile, the South must become aware of the pressing nature of its own dilemmas. The prospect is really alarming; failure to take early action, united action, may mean still further retrogression.

Without attempting to discuss the pros and cons of planning, I shall simply indicate that the crux of the whole matter lies in the problem of securing united action in the South, and secondarily in the problem of securing something like national awareness of the Southern dilemma. But how can the South be awakened to such action? How can the nation be made to understand that blood transfusion must now replace the blood sucking of the last seventy years? Mr. Odum's regionalism stands between the horns of a dilemma that can well be added to the terrifying list of Southern dilemmas. Only one force has ever drawn the Southern states together for a vast concerted effort, and that is the lusty force of strong sectional feeling. If Mr. Odum, knowing what he knows, were a Huey Long in temperament, the sound trucks would be on the road tomorrow, to translate the deficiency indices into the language of the "ignorant man." Can the social science regionalists achieve a unified effort without unleashing the sectional antagonisms that they disclaim? They cannot, unless they can discover some "moral equivalent" for sectional antagonism. It is barely possible that they may do so, if economic security continues to be a popular issue. Doubtless, too, they may do a great deal by a slow and silent process of infiltration—which very likely is what they mean to do.

Even in this last method there are difficulties. The South is sectionally selfconscious, but the active manifestations of that sectionalism are today more often negative and personal than they are affirmative and social. Without realizing what

he is doing, the average Southerner in practice separates his private folk-ways from his public opinions and actions. For himself as an individual he is responsible; for what goes on in the greater world he is not responsible. After long years of subjection he has learned to take social programs as he takes the weather. They generally come from far away, he is not responsible for them, he will do nothing about them until it becomes necessary to vote down a child labor amendment or check a racial equality movement. He is oriental in his tolerance of social movements originating elsewhere, until they begin to intrude upon his English-Scotch notion of private and clan responsibility. Thus he may theoretically approve, or at least not dissent from, a program of higher education for Negroes; but privately he does not for one moment forget that the grandfathers of those Negroes, no matter how highly educated, were his or somebody's grandfather's slaves. And this psychological dualism has other singular ramifications. It allows a singular prestige to some social movements originating outside the South, and no prestige at all to some originating within the South. This situation may be illustrated at the moment by the fact that the newly elected Browning administration in Tennessee, avowedly a reform administration and anxious to do the modern thing right, has recently called into consultation, not Howard Odum and his friends, but a gentleman from New York, the same who advised another reform administration years ago and helped to put Tennessee finances deeply in the red.

Then, to turn to other aspects of the proposal, what assurance can Mr. Odum offer that the other regions will be kindly disposed in the matter of letting some surplus cash go to rebuild the South? How does the Southern Regional Study propose to go about eliminating, or even checking, the numerous extra-regional controls that either own Southern business and agriculture or draw heavy tribute from them?

As for getting money, private philanthropy is an unpredictable element. The only way to be sure of a helpful overflow of Northeastern surplus, or national surplus, into the Southern region is to work through the Federal government. Since the South as a single region cannot control Washington, cannot even be sure that a Democratic administration at Washington will not fall into Northeastern hands, its only recourse, short of some new exhibition of Christian spirit in government, would have to be a hardboiled alliance with the Western regions. Such alliances, however, imply clearcut issues, political bargains, and a great deal of sectionalism. There is no way out of making terms, if the South is compelled to get a lot of extra money from some foreign source. The South must either play sectional politics, or it must be still a dependent, hoping to receive a bounty on terms that will not be too disagreeable or humiliating—terms that will not endanger the regional differentiation which Mr. Odum avowedly prizes. In a like dilemma Calhoun reluctantly proposed Southern independence. Mr. Odum and his colleagues, troubled with exactly the same general issues, propose a regional-national coöperation and hope for the best. If the plan works it will give the South either some very mild form of regional autonomy or a somewhat more endurable form of regional colonialism.

Perhaps more endurable. With Mr. Odum and his colleagues as the scientific satraps of the newly planned Southern province, I am certain it would be far more endurable than it is at present. But as the Roosevelt administration passes its second inaugural, it is impossible not to be disturbed at certain shadows cast upon the South by figures interposed against the blazing incandescence at Washington. What these mean, we do not know as yet. They do not gesture in Mr. Odum's kindly and catholic manner; they do not have the intellectual calm of Rupert Vance; not any of them carry,

tucked away somewhere about their persons, the particular old flag, a corner of which may sometimes be seen protruding from the pocket of Benjamin B. Kendrick. Certain appointments made during Mr. Roosevelt's second administration seem to indicate that the militant school of Southern sociologists are in favor at Washington, and that the moderates are not being called upon either to advise or to administer. Already it was true that while Mr. Roosevelt depended upon his Southern wheelhorses in Congress to do his political chores, he made few appointments to administrative departments and bureaus from the ranks of Southerners. One is almost ready to say that the nature of Mr. Odum's dilemma in regional planning is already being illustrated: Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Wallace may have decided that the South is not to have access to Federal power and Federal money except on terms that suit their plans, which, if judged by past performance, are not going to take into close consideration the complex regional situation depicted by Mr. Odum.

Yet this is only guessing, after all. Sociology is long, and the years of presidential administrations are fleeting. The picture drawn in *Southern Regions* cannot quickly be erased and forgotten. If our politics are to have a sociological flavor, the South had better get about giving Mr. Odum some support. His way is the best way to go modern under sociological auspices, as Mr. Raper's is the worst possible way. The choice between Mr. Odum and Mr. Raper is easy enough. It remains to be seen whether the South will follow the one, or submit to the other, or conceivably refuse them both.

XV. Expedients vs. Principles—Cross-Purposes in the South

If vigorous discussion is a measure of well-being in the body politic, the South is the healthiest region in the nation today. There is no other region that is arguing with as much energy and volume, or perhaps from as many different points of view, about the direction of its own affairs. Yet before we begin to rejoice over so comforting a proof of Southern vitality, a little apprehension sets in. The argument is somehow curiously unproductive of visible results. Where is it going to take the South, if anywhere, and when? If the argument does not end in some conclusive action upon which the better part of Southerners are agreed, what will it have been worth?

Such questions may have been in the mind of Rupert Vance when he recently described current Southern opinion as "a chorus of contradictory voices." This phrase occurs in the opening paragraph of *The South's Place in the Nation,* a pamphlet composed by Mr. Vance to summarize the regional studies which have been in progress under the auspices of the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council. At once he proceeds to enlarge his point by certain examples. A South Carolina editor, says Mr. Vance, holds that the South might be better off if it could have remained a part of the British Commonwealth, for then it would not have to ask for Federal subsidies to make up for its disad-

vantages as a producer of raw materials in a tariff-protected area. Another critic, an economist, feels "that the South will never raise its low level of living because of its inability to develop an industrial economy free of outside control." A social scientist holds that "the region has no choice but to admit its colonial status and ask to become the territorial ward of the nation." Communist leaders "advocate self-determination for the black belt . . . and are charged with organizing share-croppers as the shock troops of the new revolution." Southern industrialists want the situation to remain unchanged, at least where labor standards are concerned. And still other voices, doubtful of the industrial economy, insist that Southern problems cannot even approach a good solution until Southerners understand the new meaning and the contemporary validity of the South's agrarian tradition.

Sometimes the intraregional arguments of these groups are decorous and academic. More often they have resembled the knock-down-and-drag-out tactics of a frontier fight, with no holds barred and gouging permitted. I suppose many Southerners of the various schools of thought indicated above have had experiences which would illustrate this wild contentiousness. If they would agree on anything, they would agree that there does not seem to be a meeting of minds. One side shouts down the other side, or goes after an opponent's eyes and teeth. The result is not a Platonic symposium.

If the reader will pardon the presumption, I shall beg leave to narrow the illustration, for the moment, to the special experience of the so-called "Agrarian" group, with which I am familiar. The original position of the Agrarians was based upon certain principles which they felt were historically correct, or, more than that, actually were the central source from which the South—and a good deal of America besides—derived both its economics and its cultural preferences. They held that since the long prevailing contrary principles had

worked out badly, especially for the South, it was time to reassert the old principles, or at least consider on what terms they might be reasserted. The upshot was that they recommended agrarianism as containing both the principles and the program in which Southerners would do well to be interested.

But upon entering the public forum they found that even to utter the phrase, "agrarian tradition," was, in the opinion of many educated Southerners, heresy of the most absurd and violent kind. They found that a man could be verbally, if not actually, tarred and feathered for talking about such principles; and that nobody would be quicker in applying the tarbrush than some of the upholders of liberalism, tolerance, education, and progress. For example, at the 1935 conference of Southern Policy Groups, held at Atlanta, a resolution of censure, containing an angry repudiation of all agrarian tenets, was written into the minutes of the meeting above the signatures of a number of persons eminent and active in Southern affairs. At the larger meeting of the same conference, at Chattanooga in 1936, some sort of attempt was actually made to "purge" the meeting of the disturbing agrarian element. The attempt failed; but that it could be made at all, in a body assembled for the specific purpose of airing and, if possible, reconciling different opinions, indicates a strange and unfortunate condition. I cite the example not to justify the Agrarians or to criticize the Southern Policy Conference, but merely to reinforce Mr. Vance's point. The contradictory state of Southern opinion not only exists, and is confusing both to Southerners and to observers outside the South; it is approaching an excited and ominous stage. It is surely time to ask what circumstances can have produced such a grave disparity of views among men who presumably have the common and sincere desire to better Southern conditions.

The question cannot be answered without retrospect, for

the circumstances are of long standing and of great complexity. Over twenty years ago, when Woodrow Wilson (the first Southern-born president in two generations) was in the White House, the old feuds between North and South had seemingly died away. The North was amiable and philanthropic. The South seemed disposed to follow the conciliatory policy of the Henry Grady liberals. When the United States entered the World War, many editors remarked—with less nervousness than they had shown in 1898—upon the amicable enlistment of Southerner with Northerner under the Stars and Stripes.

Their satisfaction was premature. When Wilson left the White House and the party of Lodge made its triumphal reentry, the truce was quickly broken. The history of the South since that time has been marked by four series of events, occurring simultaneously and closely interrelated, but badly interpreted by those whose function it was to interpret them, and indeed so confused and mixed as to obscure their real meaning and to concentrate public attention upon false, or at least minor, issues.

First of these was the new attack, beginning during the Harding Administration, upon Southern life and its characteristic institutions. This attack has been more abusive and unrelenting than anything the Southern states have experienced since the last Federal soldier was withdrawn from their soil. In the nineteen-twenties there was no single institution, like slavery, upon which attacks could be centered. They had a vaguer objective in the so-called backwardness, or "cultural lag," of the South. The Northern press, with all of the Southern press that takes its cue from New York, have unanimously agreed that the South is guilty of numerous crimes against progress. Since 1920 there has been hardly a year without one or more Southern *causes célèbres* to agitate metropolitan newspapers and bring to Southern capitals protesting tele-

grams, eminent attorneys, and roving bands of petitioners, investigators, and missionaries of blessed or unblessed memory, with welcome or unwelcome gospels.

The list of cases begins with the New York *World's* exposé of the revived Ku Klux Klan and soon includes H. L. Mencken's denunciation of the Sahara of the Bozart. Then come, in rapid succession, the Dayton trial, the Georgia chain-gang sensations, the Harlan mine troubles, the Scottsboro case and the series of disorders connected with it, the Angelo Herndon case, the Florida floggings, the doings of Bishops Cannon and Candler, of Theodore Bilbo, Huey Long, 'Gene Talmadge, Gerald Smith, and now, finally, the Arkansas tenant-farmer disorders.[1] Of similar doings outside the South I can recall perhaps four *causes célèbres* that have received equal attention in the press: the Leopold-Loeb case, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Lindbergh kidnapping, and the Mooney-Billings case. The South has not used these four cases as the text of a moral lesson to be preached to the regions concerned. But Southern troubles have served as the text for a campaign of vilification that has effectively damaged Southern prestige in this country and abroad.

In such critical attacks one can see the outline of a familiar historical pattern which has been renewed in our time. Since the days when abolitionism first began to be militant, the South has repeatedly served as a stalking-horse for bagging game that in the last analysis had little to do with pious rewards and humanitarian reforms. Whenever the Northeast has felt a threat against its power or has wished to gain new power, the familiar story of the Southern "outrage" has flooded the press or appeared in the halls of Congress. The outcry against the "slaveocracy" paved the way for high

[1] The above was written in 1936. In October, 1937, the list can be increased by adding the *cause célèbre* of Mr. Justice Hugo Black of Alabama.

tariffs. Denunciations of the older Klan disguised the working alliance of Radical Republicans and Robber Barons; and later the waving of the bloody shirt helped to keep the unruly West in line for Republicanism. So likewise in 1920 and later, when the major problem before the American people was how to adjust an overexpanded industrial machine to post-war conditions, it was again the Southern "outrage" that kept the public amused while the way was being greased for Hoover prosperity and the great debacle of 1929.

The technique is automatic. I do not argue that it represents some deliberate, highly wrought conspiracy against the South, but rather that it is the nature of an urban, industrialized society to behave thus toward whatever stands in its path, and to feel quite self-righteous in so doing. But there are other ramifications of this technique. Not only does it serve to discredit Southern opinion and prevent it from making headway in the nation, but it also indoctrinates the South, under present conditions, with a feeling of its own inferiority and so divides the South against itself. One is tempted to call it an item of salesmanship—a step in the process of "selling" the South devices that will make it feel less inferior.

Some of these devices—for instance, compulsory public education—are very noble in purpose, so noble indeed that the backward South has innocently failed to note what a pretty penny the North has turned by selling the South a special brand of public education. The Southern teacher is notoriously ill paid; but Northern publishers and Northern authors of textbooks have waxed rich out of revenues derived from Southern adoptions. The same brand of education, now highly standardized, through its general bias "conditions" Southerners from kindergarten on up to become obedient consumers of modernity in every marketable form. When Mr. W. D. Cocking, Commissioner of Education for Tennessee, indicated a few years ago that he was glad to have "I see the

traffic light" substituted for "I see the horse" in rural school readers, he gave a perfect illustration of one thing pious Northerners expect from a Southern educational system.

All these things are items which, in economic and political history have to do with an imperializing process, which has the Northeast on the imperial end and the South on the colonial end. It parallels with remarkable precision the process by which the forward-looking Briton, speaking in the name of humanity, deplores Mahatma Gandhi's barbaric preference for loin-cloths and desires to fit him with a suit of tropical-worsted, British-made.

Second on the list of important events, and exactly contemporaneous with the new attack on the South, is the new advance of large-scale industrialism into the Southern area. Under the head of large-scale industrialism we must put—not, of course, all industry—but those industries that buy raw material cheap and sell fabricated material dear, on a national rather than a local scale, and that are concerned in the mass-purchasing, mass-production, mass-distribution cycle. There is some entirely respectable argument to the effect that the South's new industries represent a step toward self-sufficiency rather than a further slump into colonialism. So far as they are an organic growth, representing an activity of Southern capital, this may be true; yet such growth may be unhealthy where the industries imitate the common exploitative character of industries in highly urbanized regions. The "native" industries may be as abusive and reckless as the "foreign" ones. But in general the new industrial growth of the South does not seem to come from an investment of surplus Southern capital in indigenous ventures. It is a movement of Northern capital into more convenient fields. The industrial imperialism now works at short range where it once worked at long range.

Let the economists draw up the balance sheet and say whether the cash profits of the new industry actually swell the

average Southerner's bank account, or whether, as the impact of their presence persuades him to a "higher standard" of living, he finds the balance going more than ever against him as he goes deeper into the money economy. In general, it seems more true than ever that Southern raw materials—oil, minerals, lumber, cotton fiber, even foodstuffs—are bought cheap and sold back dear on a scale undreamed of twenty years ago; and that the profits do not lodge in the South but go East. Possibly the Southerner has a little more cash in the shape of wages and salary with which to do his buying; but he makes more purchases. The "high standard" of living has brought him into the industrial system of buying continually a series of articles that must continually be replaced. The result of this process in the South has been a wholesale exportation of Southern cash and, more devastatingly, of physical resources—and all without adequate compensation. It has meant depletion of resources, debt, and parasitism more vast than the South has ever experienced. For while, under a somewhat similar colonial relation in antebellum days, there was also soil exhaustion, erosion, and a moderate amount of wreckage, we must remember that then industrial imperialism had not yet come to full power in the United States. It is the coincidence of an overexpanded industrial imperialism in the Northeast with the prevalence of bad agricultural habits, confirmed by poverty and long defeat, in the South, that makes the situation vicious today. The depletion of Southern resources is progressively more rapid and widespread than in more slow-moving days, when, even with a smaller population, there were still western lands to take up its excess.

But the total effect of the new industries is best seen in connection with the third phenomenon which parallels their advent: the sudden expansion of the functions of state and local governments throughout the South, and the correspondingly sudden and enormous increase of public expenditures

thereby made necessary. Such expansion is everywhere a part of the cost of going modern. But while the Northeast has been able to pay for such public improvements out of the surplus wealth accumulated through long years of imperializing, this great expense represented in the South an immediate and overwhelming charge against a people without a surplus of wealth in the form of cash income, and long accustomed to modest public budgets. The improvements meant large borrowings and vast increases in taxation.

Howard Odum, in *Southern Regions,* gives definite figures to show how great this increase has been. Educational expense increased from an index figure of 300 in the year 1900 to 6,000 in 1930. Between 1913 and 1930 the tax increase in the Southeastern states was 307 per cent as compared with an increase of 222 per cent in the Northeast. The tax increase in Mississippi was 411 per cent in this period; in South Carolina, 448 per cent; in North Carolina, about 554 per cent. During the same period the tax increase in Massachusetts was 161 per cent, and in New York and Pennsylvania 216 per cent. But this statistical picture is not complete until we add that the South, with a larger school population in proportion to total population and with less income to draw upon than other regions, nevertheless devoted a considerably larger tax per capita to educational purposes than the other regions. Out of its poverty, in short, the South has been attempting to duplicate the educational facilities of more fortunate regions.

The burden of this great expense has fallen in the South chiefly upon those people least adequately provided with cash income—most of all upon farmers. The farmer has tried to meet the combined demands of the new "high standard" of living and the new taxation by going heavily into cash crops. He has had little success, and that little has been gained at the expense of his land and of his old independence. Thus the

advance of industry and the simultaneous expansion of governmental functions have brought a painful increase in agricultural disability, a rapid exhaustion of Southern soil, a ravaging of Southern timber, and, most alarming of all, an increase in tenancy and a decrease in farm ownership.

It might be argued that the charge for public improvements ought to be met in fair proportion by levies upon the new industrial establishments and upon the money that they were supposed to bring in. This has not happened. The industries often came upon a promise of tax-exemption. Often, too, their factory buildings were furnished them by Southern communities at a dollar a year rent, and the building expense was met —and is still being met—by assessments upon the wages of the industrial employees. When threatened with taxation, the industries were able to evade it through the work of their attorneys and lobbyists, or have it shunted along as sales taxes. Furthermore, it is difficult to get at the money that passes through industrial hands, for much of it races immediately out of the South to swell corporate surpluses elsewhere.

Economists have been slow about studying the intricate relationship between the advance of Southern industry, taxation for public improvements, the increase of tenancy, and the exportation of Southern wealth. They have Charles A. Beard's habit of concentrating on some supposed national interest and ignoring the sectional interest. But that there is a relationship is hardly open to doubt. One proof is in what has happened to Southern leaders who have attempted to divert some of the tax burden to foreign-owned corporations. From Ben Tillman to Theodore Bilbo to Huey Long the story is the same. The moment when they are suddenly discovered—by the metropolitan press—to be wicked demagogues and dictators is generally the moment when they begin to rouse the people and to dictate the tax bills of big business.

A South tender under new criticism, a South of imperializ-

ing new industries, a South of jerry-built public services and depleted farm lands—but here we must brighten the picture by adding that it is a South with a new selfconsciousness. This fourth phenomenon is a growth from native sources, not an importation. Within the past fifteen years we have witnessed the rise of a new Southern literature which is of no negligible importance in the American scene. Along with the new literature there has arisen a brilliant and powerful school of Southern historians whose work is already modifying the course of Southern, if not of national, thought. And not the least among these by any means, we have an able group of economists, sociologists, and political scientists who are organizing data and drawing up programs of reform. Everywhere in the South men of these groups have been engaged in investigation and discussion. Already they promise to become the new spokesmen of the South, and thus to invade the old monopoly of spokesmanship held by politicians, clergy, and press. Through them the South, which never was an inarticulate section, has become more articulate than ever, but in a new way. The changes in the Southern situation just described have worked powerfully upon these men, in such a way as to divide them. It is within their ranks, principally, that we find the most outspoken and significant differences of opinion.

Doubtless their discussion of Southern affairs has been provoked in part by Northern criticism of the South. But they have a larger purpose than the old resentful desire to protect the South's good name. They are aware that the South faces a decision as important as the decisions of 1776 and 1860. Out of two or three paths of action the South must presently choose one. Which ought it to be? And is the South, as a section, free to choose? Since, for better or worse, the Southern habit of mind is historical and retrospective, probably few Southerners of any of these groups would attempt to answer such questions without first committing themselves to some

interpretation of Southern history. The historian's question —what the South was?—and the related question—what the South is?—underlie every important literary work or social investigation of the past fifteen years. The discussion of such questions centers in turn upon a strategic problem: how to arrive at Southern policies that will be well founded historically and at the same time applicable to the existing situation.

But the existing situation apparently commits the Southerner to a discussion in terms that he may be reluctant to accept. This is an old difficulty. The Southerner is always pleading a sectional case before a court that insists upon ruling sectional issues irrelevant. In this dilemma Harper and Dew were driven into a defense of slavery, and Calhoun into an attack upon majority rule and an advocacy of secession. In 1850 the logic of the Northern argument was: Southern notions about democracy and the Constitution are invalid because the Southerner is an inhumane slave-holder and belongs to an arrogant "slaveocracy"; and he is speaking as a Southerner only, while we of the North are speaking as Americans and have the nation's good in mind. In 1937 the argument runs: there is no merit in a Southern approach to regional or national affairs, because the South is a backward region, addicted to lynching, illiteracy, demagogues, and hookworm. And so, if the Southerner voices a preference for a different brand of education from what is being offered, he is assailed as an enemy of education. If he questions the economy and usefulness of a certain road-building program on the ground that it serves the through-truck-and-tourist traffic but does not help the farmer, then he is asked whether he proposes to return to ox-carts. If he points out that the Constitution guarantees freedom of worship and by no means charges the government with fostering pseudo-religion disguised as science, then he is called a Fundamentalist from the Bible Belt. If he questions the wisdom of introducing

large mass-production units into an agricultural area, he is accused of wanting to do away with machinery. He must, in short, deal with arguments that continually beg the question. How shall the Southerner escape from this dilemma? How can he meet criticism, improve Southern conditions, and still be true to the South?

Liberals of the Grady-Page school apparently did not see that they were confronted with begging questions. It is hard otherwise to account for their failure to recognize that, even as late as 1900, a distinct Southern position could have been effectively and honorably maintained.

And what of the new Southern spokesmen? Some of them, certainly, have been overanxious not to plead, or seem to plead, a sectional cause, and so have themselves promulgated begging questions. These somewhat uncalculating persons are, however, less interesting a study than the social scientists who, while abjuring the sectional position, have announced themselves as committed to some kind of regionalism. Their position is thoroughly documented and is worth close examination.

The social scientists, perhaps especially those of the North Carolina school, seem inclined toward the Grady-Page tradition. Probably they would grant that begging questions and many false issues trouble the Southern air. Yet apparently they have concluded that it is now too late to adopt anything but a pragmatic approach to Southern problems. Their emphasis, as Mr. Howard Odum indicates in *Southern Regions*, is upon "realistic working plans and procedures" and "preeminently upon practical design and planning so geared to regional reality and national administration as to insure results commensurate with the demands of crisis and change and in harmony with the living principles of American institutions."

They are, then, if I may use their own term, Realists. And

what is "realism" in the treatment of Southern affairs? These men do not, like the earlier liberals, put aside Southern history as a closed chapter. Rather they accept its cogency in matters of fact and have themselves labored to extend the circumstantial record. In great detail they have set forth the social results of the South's long dependency. We owe an enormous debt to the studies undertaken by the Southern Committee of the Social Research Council and represented in the brilliant series of books by Howard Odum, Rupert Vance, and others. Such studies have clarified our knowledge of actual social facts. But the Southern Realists, while accepting history, have a fairly common though not quite unanimous tendency to narrow their interpretation of history to the single focus of economic determinism. They hold that the South, no matter what its preference may be, is limited in its choice of action to the choices that are available elsewhere in an irretrievably industrialized world.

Therefore they eschew politics, as emotional and inefficient. "Once politics demanded respect," says Mr. Vance in his summary of the Southern Regional Study. "Today it is largely futile ... Politics must abandon its futile pattern of partisanship and personalities to concern itself with questions of economic efficiency, regional economy, and social legislation." The South's old sectionalism must be subdued to a mild and pliant regionalism, which will do its differentiating without marring the grand mosaic of the national pattern. In the matter of the race problem they seem to be, though guardedly, amalgamationists. "The future of the Negro," says Mr. Vance's summary, "is essentially a problem of development and assimilation." They rarely fail to concede, as a physical fact, that the South is basically agrarian; but they qualify this concession by urging Southern farmers to raise their "standard of consumption of commodities." They approve industries of the modern type, and would welcome some of

them to the South, along with labor unions and high wage scales; at the same time they pronounce a mixed blessing upon small ownership and self-sufficient farming. They have nothing to say about monopolies. In general, they are uncritical of industry except in its relation to employees.

These few selected items do not do justice to the broad and complex program which the social scientists are erecting upon a foundation of research and experiment. But it is almost a sufficient description of the program to say that it looks to some form of ambitious social planning for the South. In Mr. Odum's account there are some reservations attached; the planning is to be flexible and coöperative, we are told, not rigid and dictatorial. In Mr. Vance's summary, however, it appears to be much the usual modern thing, with a good deal of dictation inferred. There will be two six-year periods of more or less experimental planning before the thing really starts in earnest; and all will be administered by a Southeastern Regional Planning Board on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

We arrive at the real crux of the matter when we ask by what means the plans are to be carried out. The South itself does not possess the means. Faced with the South's dependency and relative lack of cash resources, the Realists propose, if I understand them correctly, openly to accept the role of dependent for the South. The means of development must come from the wealthier sections, and, since philanthropy and business enterprise are incalculable quantities, one infers that the Realists intend somehow or other to make use of the Federal mechanism, and so divert some of the Northeastern surplus to Southern fields.

At this point the Realists, for all their disclaimers of politics and sectionalism, appear to advocate a dangerous kind of politics and an unmistakable, though subtle, form of sectionalism. This sectionalism, like the long established North-

eastern brand, would work behind a Federal disguise. Thus, by their pragmatic decision to argue Southern questions in Northeastern terms, they commit themselves either to some servile bargain or to some ambitious drive for Federal power. Their committal also would restrict the South to the same set of choices, social and economic, to which the dominance of economics and social science over politics is now limiting European thought, and, with it, the branch of Northeastern thought which leans toward European patterns. That is, planning, even of a mild variety, does not remove us from the much discussed evil choice between Fascism and Communism, but probably forces us nearer to it. The prospect is not inviting when we consider what a gross and inflated repetition of European disorders might appear in the Southern scene, with our old predisposition to violence and our difficult racial situation. It would be fair to assume that the Realists dislike that prospect as much as anybody. But they are optimists as well as Realists, and cannot believe that anything very bad can come out of their pragmatism.

This kind of optimism is a common American failing. With it the Realists show some signs of another failing now so thoroughly impressed upon Southern character that hardly any Southerners escape it. In their great and praiseworthy anxiety not to commit the Southern error of defending the seemingly indefensible, they fall into the modern Southern error of assuming that there are no Southern principles left to defend, or that, at best, such principles remain only as cultural relics that can just possibly be salvaged to make the superficial ornamentation of a new culture.

This sort of anxiety makes some men timid, others reckless and extreme. It makes discussion too soft in one case, too harsh in another. Surely what the South needs, if discussion is to be firm, yet not exasperating, is to clear away the false issues, the confused and misleading terms. To do this it is

necessary, for a time at least, to get away from expedients and back to principles.

In a famous letter to Madison, written from Paris, December 20, 1787, Thomas Jefferson made the following observations at the close of his discussion of the new American Constitution:

> And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government, or information to the people. This last is the most certain, and the most legitimate engine of government ... They [the people] are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty ... This reliance cannot deceive us, as long as we remain virtuous; and I think we shall be so, as long as agriculture is our principal object, which will be the case, while there remain vacant lands in any part of America. When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there.

In these sentences the basic theme of American history is set forth in epitome, and in such form as to indicate that Southern history is the key to American history and to the puzzle of the contemporary South as well.

Thomas Jefferson, with many other Americans of his day, was a child of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and, to a lesser degree, of the Romantic Movement which succeeded it. But the liberalism with which he endowed the American idea of government included a shrewd assessment of the differences between the conditions under which American liberty could flourish and the European conditions which were destined to pervert liberalism into utilitarianism and *laissez faire*. With the rank and file of Americans a feeling for this difference was inborn, because in the special environment of this continent they had retained and developed some of the Renaissance and Reformation traditions which in Europe, by the

time of the American Revolution, had taken on quite a different color. With Jefferson, as with many of his great contemporaries, the new American tradition, which stemmed originally out of an older European tradition, was fully rationalized. It is wrong to argue that Jefferson and the Constitution-makers could not foresee the industrial revolution and the subsequent changes which, in the opinions of many, now call for drastic alteration of our government. Far more reasonably it could be said that our government was shaped and animated as it was *because* Jefferson and others did foresee in general outline what might happen and *because* they wished to avoid precisely the dilemmas now before the country.

Jefferson, as Gilbert Chinard, his recent biographer, asserts, was interested not merely in establishing a form of government, but "in protecting and preserving a certain pattern of civilization which was essentially an agricultural pattern." Although this agricultural pattern already existed in America, it had suffered under English imperialism—it had already, as in the South today, been forced into money crops and soil exhaustion. American independence gave an opportunity not only for establishing a new form of government, but also for building a civilization adapted to the special American conditions and free from the hazards that might have attended its establishment in a European state.

With reason, therefore, Jefferson feared European, and especially English, interference in American affairs. With no less reason he hesitated, as is shown by his correspondence with Dupont de Nemours, to recommend the American form of government as practicable, say, in France. The distinctions between America and Europe were these: America had a surplus of land, as Europe did not; Americans were used to freedom of choice and non-conformity, while Europe was doctrinaire even in its liberalism and was used to narrow choices and much conformity; America was relatively free of the in-

stitutional accumulations of class and creed that overloaded Europe; but, most important of all, America was comfortably distant from the exploitative commercialism, founded on manufacture and high finance, that was well under way in Great Britain. Perhaps Jefferson could not have predicted the exact form that industrial capitalism would take, but he had a good notion of what it might be like. In the letter to Madison just cited, Jefferson advocated "restriction of monopolies" as an entirely proper item for insertion in the Bill of Rights. He was familiar with the doctrines of the French Physiocrats. With his friend Dupont he had discussed the advent of an industrial proletariat of the order described in the following passage from a letter written by Dupont to Jefferson:

> That class of people who work in factories where work is divided as much as possible, do not contribute any happiness, nor any power and constitute an evil for a nation. They are unable to oppose any resistance to conquerors. It is because of them and often through them that tyrants dictate laws.

At the same time Jefferson was not, like Dupont de Nemours, a strict and doctrinaire agrarian. He did not agree with Dupont's argument that manufactures should be entirely excluded from the United States. He even rejoiced when Embargo stimulated American industry. In short, he made many practical concessions (for he was a practical statesman, not a mere theorist), but he never abandoned his main principles.

His great contemporary and follower, John Taylor of Caroline, extended and applied these principles. Taylor set forth the theory and practice of an American political economy, based on agrarianism, in bold contrast to the European economy, based on industry and finance, which under Hamiltonian sponsors was raising a militant head in the United States. As with Jefferson, the distinction between American and European conditions was at the base of Taylor's notions about society, politics, and agriculture. The pages of Taylor's

Arator and of his *Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* are so applicable to present conditions that they might well have been written for the campaigns of 1932 and 1936 rather than for the battle against the Federalists. These pages, rather than the pages of Karl Marx's *Capital,* would seem to be the proper guide for Americans who wish to interpret their history in the light of American conditions.

The preservation of democracy, Taylor observed, depended upon its ability to cope with the new aristocracy of credit, monopoly, and incorporation arising in Europe, as England pushed forward her schemes in a world where her most powerful continental competitors had been disabled by the long ravaging of the Napoleonic wars. In the continent of North America, the Northeast of Alexander Hamilton had much the same designs under way: an imperializing commercialism, depending upon a centralized manipulation of money, credit, and tariff privileges. More clearly than Jefferson, Taylor defined the danger of giving perpetual legal privileges to corporations. In a democracy there was peril even in the notion of inviolability of contract when it applied to corporate personalities. How did it happen, Taylor asked, that law enacted for the benefit of a nation was repealable, but that "law enacted for the benefit of individuals [i.e., corporate personalities], though oppressive to a nation, is a charter, and irrepealable?"

In his *Arator,* a series of essays aimed at improving the bad estate of agriculture, Taylor cited England as the horrible example of a nation that had exploited its agriculture and showered special privileges upon industry and finance. He dealt summarily with propaganda intended to seduce the farmer into putting his faith in tariffs and bounties.

> The farce of legal favour or encouragement [he wrote] has been so dexterously acted in England, to delude both the agri-

cultural and mechanical interest, the interest of labour, or the majority of the nation, as to have delivered this majority, shackled by protecting duties, into the hands of an inconsiderable monied aristocracy, or combination of capitalists....

We farmers and mechanics have been political slaves in all countries, because we are political fools. We know how to convert a wilderness into a paradise, and a forest into palaces and elegant furniture; but we have been taught by those whose object is to monopolize the sweets of life, which we sweat for, that politics are without our province, and in us a ridiculous affectation; for the purpose of converting our ignorance into the screen of regular advances, which artificial interests or legal factions, are forever making in straight or zigzag lines, against the citadel of our rights and liberties. Sometimes after one of these marauding families have pillaged for a thousand years, we detect the cheat, rise in the majesty of our strength, drive away the thief, and sink again into a lethargy of intellect so gross, as to receive him next day in a new coat, as an accomplished and patriotic stranger, come to cover us with benefits. Thus we got rid of tythes, and now we clasp banks, patronage, and protecting duties to our bosom. Ten per centum upon labour was paid to a priesthood, forming a body of men which extended knowledge, and cultivated good morals, as some compensation for forming a legal faction, guided by the spirit of encroachment upon the rights and property of the majority. Forty per centum is now paid upon our labour, to a legal faction guided by the same spirit, and pretending to no religion, to no morality, and to no patriotism, except to the religion, morality, and patriotism of making itself daily richer, which it says will enrich the nation.... This legal faction of capitalists... far from being satisfied with the tythe claimed by the old hierarchy, will, in the case of the mechanics, soon appropriate the whole of their labour to its use, beyond a bare subsistence; though, in the case of the farmers, it has yet gotten only about four times as much of theirs as was extorted by the odious, oppressive, and fraudulent tythe system. We know death very well, when killing with one scythe, but mistake him for a deity, because he is killing with four.

Thus does Taylor describe the ease with which, under an industrial system, a free state might be converted into a

servile state. What Taylor feared has happened, to a large extent, although not without many setbacks to the course of industrial imperialism and many changes of party alignments and party catchwords.

At the turn of the century the Jeffersonians won their great victory. The nation then entered upon what many consider its best period, the time of Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Polk. In this period Agrarians, chiefly of the South and West, gave direction to national policies, and the financial-minded Northeast was held more or less in check, but not of course without considerable trouble, since a political victory in those days did not result in the extermination of the minority party.

Historians have been prone to pass over lightly an important feature, suggested by the circumstances just indicated, of the sectional divisions of the early nineteenth century and later. Over and above the sectional differentiations that are commonplace there was another difference so persistent that one wonders how it can have escaped close study. From the close of the Revolution to the present day the Northeast has had a strong tendency to look to contemporary Europe for its cue in economics, culture, and general philosophy, and to reject, as outmoded, many of the Americanisms which it once shared with other sections. But the South and the sections of the West have retained, even when their spokesmen were unable to draw the issue clearly, a stubborn doubt of the merit of European importations.

The Northeastern tendency (itself a form of cultural colonialism) can be illustrated in striking detail when one passes from economic and political thought to philosophy and literature. Emerson and the Transcendental school, for all of their "Yankee" philosophy, did not interpret American democracy so much as they gave a modern American tinge to a European notion of democracy. Certainly they never understood and never spoke for the America that lay west and

south of the Hudson. The compromise that they made—a New England form of the Victorian compromise—in abstracting political liberalism from the Jeffersonian philosophy and conveniently neglecting all the rest of it, is well illustrated in Daniel Webster, who thundered idealistically about liberty and union even while he conferred his private blessing upon high finance. There are not many social or political ideas, whether humanitarian or exploitative, stemming from the Northeast during the nineteenth century, which did not first originate in England or some other European nation.

After the defeat of the Federalist party the men of Hamiltonian principles learned their lesson well. Thenceforth they took pains to clothe their principles in American garments, or at least to affix American labels. Never again did they make their initial error of hankering after a monarchy in name. It would be sufficient to have a democracy in name if they could have a monarchy or an oligarchy in fact. The famous "American system" of the Henry Clay Whigs had this kind of protective coloration; and Henry Clay was a somewhat more eloquent and able Alfred Landon. Later on, the party of Lincoln assumed the name of Jefferson's old party. The ringing Americanisms of the Declaration of Independence were used to cloak an attack upon the most peculiar and natively appropriate of American institutions: the written Constitution. In the name of the Union, a war was waged whose ultimate effect was to strike down obstacles to the development of a consolidated industrial empire, and, through the Fourteenth Amendment, to set at naught Taylor's old suspicion of charters and to give the Northeast a great exploitative weapon.

Nevertheless the issues were so confused that the South and not the North was charged with forsaking American principles. This confusion was increased by blundering Southern attempts to win European support during the War of the

Sixties. Greater confusion has followed as urban culture and ideology have accompanied the steady infiltration of the Northeastern economy throughout the continent. By 1914 we had become so far enmeshed in the European system that what Jefferson had feared actually came to pass. For the first time since the earliest days of the Republic European money was freely spent and European influence was freely used to determine national policy in the United States. In 1917, with comparative ease, we were drawn into the World War on the side of England, France, and Russia. There is strong indication now that history is being repeated. The prospect of another European war again sees European influence—and probably European money—working to secure American support for this or that alliance of foreign interests.

Such a long established confusion of issues makes it easy now for an idea or an expedient to claim support on the ground that it is national, American, and inevitable, when it may be no more than a rationalization of a sectional and not at all inevitable idea or expedient having its ultimate origin in Europe. If it emanates from the Northeast, there is generally good reason to examine it for marks of that kind of rationalization—though that alone would not be sufficient cause for rejecting it in the South, if it can claim merit. Still it is true that the lack of merit of some such ideas and expedients, or indeed their positive harmfulness in the Southern situation, is often obscured from Southerners because such things come to them labeled *national, American, inevitable.*

The same confusion of issues leads to Southern apologetics of a familiar ranting sort; or, what is worse, it leads to a spineless lack of any good apologetics when some perfectly tenable Southern position needs defense; or, what is still worse, as I have earlier pointed out, it sets Southerners fiercely against one another, drives them into ridiculous asperities, and makes serious public discussion more and more difficult

within the South. And there is still another bad result. It divides the well-read and the up-to-the-minute Southerners, who conscientiously digest current books and reviews, and are, through their membership in clubs and national organizations, exposed to the clamorous programs continually issuing from Megalopolis—it divides these persons from their less well-read brothers and sisters, in farm and mill, who stick to their old principles without being able, quite, to define them or find the proper vocabulary of reply to modern propositions that come hurtling upon them.

This is a difficult situation indeed. But are we to let ourselves go in confusion until we reach the point where we can no longer discuss matters at all, or shall be so thoroughly colonialized that we shall no longer wish to do so? Unless we can clear away confusion and agree on some of the basic issues, we shall arrive at one of these alternatives.

Out of various important issues, there is one most important issue which arises out of plain historical interpretation. We are certainly free, as rational creatures, to ask whether the experiment which the Northeast has tried out for seventy years in the great continental laboratory has really been a success. Our present condition does not suggest that it has been anything like a complete success. In comparison with the preceding experiment of Jeffersonian agrarianism (which to be sure had circumstances in its favor—maybe temporary, maybe not) it hardly seems to have provided that measure of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to which Hamiltonians have given lip-service, or, for that matter, so far as the majority of Americans are concerned, even the bounteous material comfort for which the system makes special claims. Perhaps this, then, is the basic question: Are we so far committed to the later experiment that we cannot retract from it, but must continue it, seeking within its terms for methods of correction? Yet we cannot be altogether realistic in answer-

ing such a question unless we are willing to consider the alternative question: Can we still seek the twentieth-century American equivalent of our earlier conceived destiny as a nation?

The experience of Southerners, one would think, ought to impel them to go behind the film of expediency and propaganda that colors opinion nowadays, and seek to base their discussions on such issues. Have they done so? Will they do so? Do they have a distrust of "crisis legislation," whether it emanates from a Hoover or a Roosevelt regime? Do they really think that six-year plans are preferable to the Jeffersonian way of building for the centuries? Such questions, which call for a reconsideration of principles in the light of historical experience, would lead Southerners to ask other questions such as the following: whether social planning is open to the objection brought against the present system—namely, that under American conditions the social plan itself might fall into the hands of an oligarchy of section or class, who, while maintaining the fiction of democracy as Augustus maintained the fiction of senatorial rule, might manipulate it to serve narrow interests; whether agriculture can ever be "balanced" with industry so long as industry retains its ever-expanding, monopolistic, exploitative character; whether there can be such a thing as a "national interest" as long as the South does not share in determining national policies or can share only as a dependent, at the mercy of political changes and shifting fads.

The South could well afford to risk some material sacrifice if it could reassume the historic position it had when it stood for policies that rested on principles. In that time the South was the mother of statesmen and, even if it lost the argument, kept its self-respect. If one should canvass Mr. Vance's list of contradictory voices for their disposition to engage in a discussion of principles rather than expedients, what would be

the showing? Of all the lot, surely the South Carolina editor would have a flair for it; and just possibly some of the social scientists, for Mr. Odum and Mr. Vance, though inhibited by their professional dignity as research workers, have shown an inclination to get at neglected issues; and there are the Agrarians, who have the undeniable but seemingly unenvied distinction of emphasizing first principles even at the expense of concreteness in program-making. It is a scattering array, not strategically equipped for uniting Southern opinion.

How, under such circumstances, can Jefferson's way of "giving information to the people" be effective in the South? Can principles enunciated as Southern principles, of whatever cast, get a hearing? The facts would indicate the contrary. It seems to be a rule that the more special the program and the more remote it is from Southern principles, the greater the likelihood of its being discussed and promulgated. Southerners who wish to engage in public discussion in terms that do not happen to be of common report in the New York newspapers are likely to be met, at the levels where one would least expect it, with tactics of distortion, abuse, polite tut-tutting, angry recrimination, and so on down to the baser devices of journalistic lynching which compose the modern propagandist's stock in trade. This is an easy and a comparatively certain means of discrediting an opponent and of thus denying him a hearing. It is also a fatal means. For if such approaches to public questions are encouraged and condoned, then confusion has done its work well, the day of free and open discussion of ideas is over in the South, only matters of crass expediency can come into the public forum at all, and we face the miserable prospect of becoming the most inert and passive section of the United States, or else of falling into blind and violent divisions whose pent-up force will hurl us at each other's throats. Then will Jefferson's prophetic vision come true. We shall take to eating one another, as they do in Europe.

XVI. The Southern Poet and His Tradition[1]

Ten years ago, in reviewing *Carolina Chansons,* the editor of *Poetry* saw in the joint work of DuBose Heyward and Hervey Allen the promise of a new articulateness for the South. The South had a heroic past; it was rich with legend and fierce with feeling; there was no perceptible reason, Miss Monroe thought, why Mr. Heyward and other Southerners then beginning to write should not make the fullest possible use of the material at hand. Out of the Southern tradition there ought to grow an exciting, possibly a really great Southern poetry which would be a considerable ornament to American letters.

At the time, I was one of a group of poets in Nashville, Tennessee, who though committed to the idea of a distinctly Southern poetry could not entirely accept Miss Monroe's doctrine. We felt that it was dangerous to prescribe any special subject matter for the new Southern poets; and it was dangerous to tie them up with the sort of local color program that Miss Monroe's remarks seemed to imply. In the columns of *The Fugitive,* then just getting under way, we said as much, and said it with a defiant bellicosity that was quite wasted. If it had been noticed, it might have reminded observers that the picturesque charm of the Carolina Low Country was one

[1] First published in May, 1932, in the "Southern Number" of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.*

thing, but the pugnaciousness of the western South, still "half-horse, half-alligator" and ready to fight all comers, was another thing.

It is not my task to say whether the Southern poets, in the ten years since *Carolina Chansons*, have fulfilled Miss Monroe's hope. Mr. Heyward, to be sure, seems to have abandoned poetry. The "poetry renaissance" of the South is less ebullient than it was in 1920-22. The Poetry Society of South Carolina, surely the finest organization of its kind then in existence, probably finds itself in the embarrassing position of wondering where the poets have gone whom it is pledged to foster.

It is time to state Miss Monroe's proposition again, though in slightly different terms. After all, it is a fair question to ask why Southern poets, as artists with a very special local heritage, cannot write like Southerners, rather than like "advanced" Parisians or Greenwich villagers; and why they cannot, among other things, write about the indubitably Southern themes, even the Southern legends, places, heroes, though that alone, of course, will not make them Southern poets, or in fact, poets of any sort.

Yet this, it seems, is precisely what many of them cannot do, or cannot without falling into grievous error. A young poet "emerging" in the South today is in danger of following one of two courses, both of which are bad. In one case he will utterly divorce himself from all sense of locality and at once begin to write clever but trifling imitations of decadent poetasters in New York, London, and Paris. But, if he is safely illiterate, and so manages to escape the infection of our times, he may then write "Southern" poetry containing very proper local references; and this is sure to be as empty as the other was clever. One tendency gives us modernists of every type —people who begin by grandly renouncing their birthright and by contributing to woolly Messiah magazines of the *Blues* or *Contempo* variety. The other tendency begets local laure-

ates: cheerful infants who commit monstrosities such as state songs on the model of Katharine Lee Bates' "America the Beautiful." This happens too often not to be emphasized as a phenomenon of our times. It can be traced out on a considerable scale in such an anthology as Mr. Addison Hibbard's *The Lyric South*. It appears, though to a less horrifying degree, in the work of some of our best poets. It almost amounts to this: that a poet cannot be "Southern" without behaving like a fool; and if he tries not to be a fool, he will not be recognizably "Southern."

But the malady, if it is such, is not limited to the poets. It may be found in a far more virulent degree among Southern writers of fiction, some of whom have occupied themselves —and with no little success—in getting out "Yankee" novels about the virtues of the downtrodden black man and the vices of the depraved white man in the South. I should be the last to decry the excellence that the better of these writers display. But it is evident that the attitudes underlying their work are too often borrowed from the progressive North and do not belong to the conservative South.

Yet they should not be blamed too harshly. In America—or at least in the progressive America which has been most vocal in recent years—every man who starts out to be an artist is subjected to a subtle but powerful pressure to emancipate himself from his native surroundings. If he is born in Keokuk and wants to do serious writing, his first act must be either to run away from Keokuk or somehow disclaim it. His craft does not come to him as part of a generally diffused tradition which has local roots and which he naturally appropriates as his own. No, he must get out and grab what he can from the set of rapidly shifting formulae spawned from the disorder of a delocalized, vaguely cosmopolitan society, masquerading rather noisily as a civilization. What does this society, loudly proclaiming its devotion to culture and the good life, have to

teach the artist? To judge from the evidence, it teaches contempt, suspicion, disillusionment; it has no positive standards to offer, other than a maudlin apostrophe to Beauty, and no loyalties to anything nearer at hand than a somewhat tenuous world-soul. If I may use the words of one of its popular prophets, Everett Dean Martin, it says to the artist, as to all "civilized" persons: "It is nobler to doubt than to believe, for to doubt is often to take sides with fact against oneself." The skeptical, at-cross-purposes tendency of our society was never better epitomized than in this amazing and, I would say, damnable utterance. Whatever it may mean for the scientist, this pronouncement offers a lamentable prospect for the poet, who must believe or perish. It is no wonder that our artists believe nothing; or, by a natural reaction, they turn in and believe too much, trying vainly to rebuild a personal mythology of some kind as a substitute for the tradition that the worshippers of doubt have destroyed.

Southern writers share this malady along with American writers in general, but one nevertheless feels that they ought not to share as much as they do. For Southern society is not yet "American" society. While the North has been changing its apparatus of civilization every ten years or so—this being, I fear, the peculiar curse inherited from that restless haunted soul, Abraham Lincoln—the South has stood its ground at a fairly safe distance and happily remained some forty or fifty years behind the times. Having once got hold of an idea, even though it be not quite a perfect idea, the South does not hasten to discard it, but keeps holding on. The South has never been able to understand how the North, in its astonishing quest for perfection, can junk an entire system of ideas almost overnight, and start on another one which is newer but no better than the first. This is one of the principal differences, out of many real differences, between the sections.

One would expect that Southern writers would be responsive

to this stable tradition. The South ought to have an artistic tradition to fit its social and historical background. One ought to be able to say of it, as Æ said of Ireland, that it is a good field for the arts, especially for poetry, simply because, in contrast to progressive America, it has long been defeated and poor and behind the times; or, furthermore, because it offers its people belief rather than doubt, conviction rather than skepticism, loyalty rather than distrust. There ought to be something virile and positive in its art, as an art linked by devotion to a concrete place rather than animated by a loose enthusiasm for a "national" culture which has no organic unity behind it. For instance, if a Southerner had written *John Brown's Body*, one would have expected to find the subject treated with more conviction and finality than Stephen Vincent Benét, writing somewhat remotely, could put into it.

Turning to the literary past, I find the evidence on this point rather confused and not too comforting. I should hardly join with those determined Rebels who would defend Southern literature at any cost against the aspersions of Yankee critics. On the other hand, I should disclaim any agreement with those very fashionable critics—among them a few Southerners —who have been issuing passionate and contemptuous repudiations of the supposedly "sentimental" literature of the Old South. The literature of the Old South is neither as good nor as bad as partisans have represented it to be. Vernon Louis Parrington, at least, has proved that the South shared with the West the dignity of producing a more respectable body of literature than the New England Brahmins ever used to allow. The poetry of the Old South and of the post-bellum South had the virtues and defects of American poetry in general; it was Romantic, or it was Victorian, with some sporadic excellence but with no concerted and general achievement such as existed in New England. In the South there are Poe and Lanier to set off against Emerson and Whitman;

there are minor poets like Timrod, Hayne, Russell, Pinckney, or even the newly discovered Chivers. There are also the folk-singers, whose value is only now being realized. These anonymous poets—makers of ballads, songs, and spirituals—were and are abundant in the South. Yet on the whole one might well say with John Crowe Ransom that the arts of the South in times past took another direction than poetry. They were the eighteenth-century arts of dress, conversation, manners: or, I might add, of architecture, handicraft, oratory, anecdote —all respectable enough and sufficiently recorded to the credit of the South. There is no reason to think that these arts did not express a Southern tradition rather intimately and without any fumbling or debate. Indeed, the problem of the relation of the Southern artist to his tradition did not then arise in its modern form.

Now, however, it has arisen, and the issues it raises are acute. If the South is destined, as so many people are saying, to be "articulate" on a scale never before realized, it would be a strange trick of fate for writers to find themselves, at such a moment, inhibited from a free expression of the Southern tradition, unable to speak for the South as a living historic entity which is separate from America though bound to it, and still abiding to a marked degree by the tenets of a civilization so thoroughly un-American (in the modern sense) that it is in one breath romantically admired and in the next breath harshly deplored by the much interested North.

Yet such is the danger that threatens. Those well-wishers, like Miss Monroe, who are rightly eager to see a Southern poetry arise which is recognizably Southern and not merely a somewhat tropical version of Sandburg, Robinson, or Eliot—those critics must recognize that there is civil strife within the South itself, and because of this civil strife the peculiar dilemma of the American artist, described above, becomes deeply accented.

And how unnecessarily so. Left undisturbed, the Southern tradition would undoubtedly register effectively in art. But it has not been left undisturbed. Instead, the so-called Southern liberal group, who have of late grown much in power, aided by Northern philanthropy and by agitation in Northern journals, have bent every energy to persuade the South to make over its civilization on the progressive Northern plan, largely through the combined agencies of a sweeping industrialization and a large-scale "liberalized" scheme of public education. The effect of this program has undoubtedly been to dislocate many Southern writers from a proper relation to their own people and their own tradition. As studied, for example, in such a center of progressive agitation as the University of North Carolina, the program would reveal on the one hand a determined effort to encourage young Southern writers to be spokesmen for their own section—to produce a modern literature expressive of the South. So far, so good. This would be laudable indeed, were it all.

But there is also the social program that underlies and accompanies the program for the encouragement of the arts. This social program is not native at all. It is foreign to the ideas that are most deeply rooted in the Southern experience and the Southern temperament. It involves a repudiation not only of the Southern past but of the elements of the Southern character that are most firmly ingrained. The progressive leaders, in short, are asking the Southern writer to pay a terrible price for his modernity. They are asking contradictory things, and with such influences beating upon them, Southern artists will escape distortion only by being uncommonly level-headed and discerning. As long as such a condition endures, the Southern artists who are affected will do their work under the handicap of a painful selfconsciousness. Theirs will be the dilemma of the modern artist who in one act must both deny himself and express himself.

There is no remedy, short of the rise to power of a body of Southern writers, economists, politicians, and clergy who will fight to a finish the new order of carpetbaggers and scalawags—or else assimilate them. But even this remedy has much peril for the arts, which do not profit much by contentiousness. It is certain, however, that the well-wishers for the South cannot with one gesture "uplift" the South into the blessings of modern civilization, and with another demand of Southern writers that they exhibit in their works the virtues of a way of life that they have just been urged to repudiate. Yet if there is hope—and I think there is much hope, in view of the extraordinary confusion into which industrial civilization has got itself—the poets are likely to go further than other writers toward realizing the ideal of a free expression of the Southern character in literature. For the poets are unpopular, the poets are never promoted, they escape the commercial taint that hangs over novelists and playwrights. Let them, then, write what they will, depending on their own integrity for a guide, and if they live like the Miller of Dee, envying nobody and with nobody envying them, they need not fear that their integrity will be impugned or spoiled.

THE WORLD STATE

XVII. The Shape of Things and Men: H. G. Wells and Æ on the World State

The newspaper says that H. G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* has been made into a talking picture and will shortly appear in our city. How should one greet this evidence of the shape of things as they are? With a sigh of resignation? Or with a hiss of discontent? American audiences are too well "conditioned" to hiss, and, besides, what good does it do to hiss a shadow on a screen? Shall we then take refuge in the philosophical reflection that it was foreordained, as a part of the vulgar harmony of things modern, that Mr. Wells's Utopianism should at last abandon its pretensions to being literature or science and find its appropriate medium in the movies? This time, we shall not have to shed tears over the vulgarization of some masterpiece.

Yet there is something ominous in the prospect. The generation that calls itself modern can hardly remember a time when Mr. Wells was not offering some vision of the future. We used to call his stories "fantasies" or "scientific romances" and gave them the respect we would give to any bit of highly colored fiction. Even if the stories came true in part, as some of Jules Verne and Edward Bellamy was coming true, we were not greatly bothered. We might even be pleased, for

life might thereby become in one stroke both more exciting and more convenient. But we are far off from that mood nowadays. Science and invention have moved noticeably in the direction that Mr. Wells's insistent wand has pointed. The world looks more like a Wells landscape than it did before 1914.

Yet if it is exciting, it is not always pleasantly exciting. For the masses, the old naïve wonder at the prodigies of science has dwindled to a passive expectation that anything can happen; and that, since it can, it probably will. The Wells talking picture will seem plausible enough to the readers of *Time* and the Hearst Sunday supplement. If we have had a Lindbergh, why not a Buck Rogers? If we have airplanes, why not interplanetary rockets? If we have national states, gigantically but not completely industrialized, why not a World State to make the whole thing perfectly efficient and complete? *Why not?* is about the only kind of *why* that people can get into their heads nowadays. If we are going to be stubborn dissenters and ask *why* rather than *why not,* it is time to look to our weapons and decide how to deal with this formidable historian whose history is always in the future tense. For however much the Wellsian prognostications may be disclaimed by the professionals as being non-professional and irregular, they are a part of the wish-thinking of social scientists and many physical scientists in our time, and must therefore be dealt with seriously.

This time the Wellsian prognostication purports to be the "dream book" of one Philip Raven, an aged diplomatist of the League of Nations—a manuscript left, by an odd chance, in the hands of H. G. Wells as editor. It is a "history," though a highly selective one, of events transpiring between 1929 and 2106. To give this prognosticating history a measure of verisimilitude, Mr. Wells notes that in the Raven MS. he finds predictions of the death of Ivar Kreuger, of the Lind-

bergh kidnapping, and of the Hitler regime—events which occurred *after* Raven's supposed death. As editor he solemnly confesses that he has been tempted to regard the book as the "imaginative outlet" of an intensely practical person; but it might also be "a conditional prophecy in the Hebrew manner produced in a quasi-inspired mood."

The first fourth of the book is actual history, of a sort, ranging up to the nineteen-thirties. It is remarkably like a cross between *The Outline of History* and a Wells Sunday article on the European situation.

From 1930 on, the actual history merges imperceptibly into the putative history. After the "First World War" of 1914, we are told, come political combinations which end in a series of still greater world wars. The earth is devastated, humanity is wiped out or left surviving in disordered fragments, bandits and robbers take possession, and civilization is gone.

But it is not quite gone. It returns with the restoration of a transport system by a few gallant Air Men, who presently take into their hands the task of bringing about order—or, rather, a new order. They set up a World Council and make a "Lifetime Plan" for world reconstruction. The scheme of course requires the suppression of foolish dissenters, but the Air Men magnanimously contrive to avoid the bloody purges and liquidations of previous centuries. They make use of a gas, prettily named "pacificin," which renders stubborn people (like faithful Roman Catholics, for instance) harmlessly inert. What results, after all mistakes have been rectified and all rebellion quashed, is a regular World State on the Wellsian plan, a Utopia ruled by a selfless, quite scientific aristocracy, who have absolute control of world affairs and no sentimental notions about the rights of man.

In his capacity as editor, Mr. Wells adds the following comment:

If this is neither a dream book nor a Sibylline history, then it is a theory of world-revolution. Plainly the thesis is that history must now continue to be a string of accidents with an increasingly disastrous trend, until a comprehensive faith in the modernized World-State, socialistic, cosmopolitan, and creative, takes hold of the human imagination. When the existing governments and ruling theories of life, the decaying religions and the decaying political forms of today, have sufficiently lost prestige through failure and catastrophe, then and only then will world-wide reconstruction be possible. And it must needs be the work, first of all, of an aggressive order of religiously devoted men and women who will try out and establish and impose a new pattern of living upon the race.

The emphasis is on the word *impose*. Clearly, if enough people do not agree to believe in Mr. Wells's outline of the future, then those who do believe must impose it, if necessary by force, upon the unbelievers. The coming race must understand (he makes his historian say) "that there can be only one right way of looking at the world for a normal human being and only one conception of a proper scheme of social reactions, and that all others must be wrong and misleading."

Such statements indicate the danger of growing old without ever growing up. Mr. Wells, once a happy forward-looker, has become dogmatic and grim in his old age. He talks like an angry sociologist, or a baffled Shelley who at a pinch will prefer Jupiter's law of iron to Prometheus' law of love.

At this point the fundamental weakness of Mr. Wells's vision is revealed. He is not, after all, a voice of the future. He is a voice of the past—indeed, of a very particular past of recent date which may appear, in time to come, as one of the most crude and naïve chapters in human history. His way of pretending to look bravely and nobly into the future is a trick for interpreting the past to suit a kind of scheming by which he wants to modify and control the present. He is

that most inferior kind of romanticist—a man who is retrospective without knowing it.

For, while announcing his devotion to science, Mr. Wells does not care to argue that a horoscope itself can be scientific, nor does he call his work science. He invokes, instead, an old magic and an old art. He combines fiction and history, mixing them so that the innocent reader will hardly know where history leaves off and fiction begins. What he wants to do is to borrow the great prestige of history, whose view is ever retrospective, for his fiction, the social purpose of which looks toward the future. And why does he use fiction? I think because Mr. Wells knows that fiction persuades where logic fails, since the human mind, though modern enough in some ways, has its old contrary habit of accepting the truths of art and rejecting the truths of science. This is an odd role in which to find the advocate of a scientifically controlled world-order.

But why does history have so much prestige that Mr. Wells also invokes it as a kind of magic? Here we can date a man who would like to be considered timeless. Mr. Wells is a child of a great retrospective movement—nineteenth-century Romanticism. And nineteenth-century Romanticism is only the last phase of the still greater retrospective movement that encompasses it—the Renaissance. Mr. Wells illustrates the old paradox of the revival of learning. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, men—especially Englishmen—began to look back at the very moment when they were in process of laying hands upon a new instrument, science, which would give them an unaccustomed and disturbing way of looking forward. There has been a long interplay of romantic retrospection and scientific forward-looking. During a great part of the period men have felt compelled to look back in order to discover means of rescuing society from the disorder into which it has been thrown by science, pure and

applied. I suppose that no other period in human history can rival the Renaissance for the sharpening of historical self-consciousness. No other time has been so determined to compile and interpret historical facts, and yet this has happened during a time when science has seemed to make discoveries that destroy the virtue of historical study.

A curious passage in *The Shape of Things to Come* bears witness to the pitiful division of Mr. Wells's mind between retrospect and prospect:

> There was no such thing as a Center of Knowledge in the world [his historian is speaking of the old bad days before the World State took charge]. It is remarkable to note how long mankind was able to carry on without any knowledge organization whatever.... To the people of the Age of Frustration our interlocking research, digest, discussion, verification, notification, and informative organizations, our Fundamental Knowledge System, that is, with its special stations everywhere, its regional bureaus, its central city at Barcelona, its seventeen million active workers, and its five million correspondents and reserve inquirers, would have seemed incredibly vast.

In other words, progress for Wells means a glorified and enormous British Museum, properly "socialized," which will bind the twenty-first century to the same kind of systematic retrospect that men of his Victorian childhood invented and developed. The poor man cannot conceive of a fact as simply *being* in the living harmony of things and men. For him it is not a fact until it has been "retrospected" (we need a coined word here); that is, until it has been preserved in the formaldehyde pickle of a card index and has thus been made into a specimen. In the Wellsian future no moment will have a meaning until it has been seized, recorded, tabulated. Mr. Wells's mental habit is like that of our newspaper editors, who are continually publishing little columns to remind us of what happened yesterday a year ago, or five years ago, or twenty-five years ago.

Next, there is Mr. Wells's frightened concern over the imminent collapse of civilization and his somewhat Spenglerian view of the decline and fall of nations. This phobia has been troubling Mr. Wells for a long time. In its original form it was harmless enough, for he imagined only catastrophes beyond human control, like the meeting of a comet with the earth, or a visitation from hostile Martians. But in the later stage he fears catastrophes of human origin, such as tremendous wars, or the failure of socialism, or, if I interpret him correctly, a religious revival. This notion of inevitable decadence and collapse is merely another phase of the sharpened historical consciousness which is both romantic and modern. When did it start? Perhaps renewed acquaintance in modern times with the works of Thucydides and Tacitus, the historians of decline, had a little to do with it. Gibbon, surely, is the chief modern progenitor of the idea. The popularity of his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in the early nineteenth century forced pessimistic analogies into the heads of a war-weary generation of poets and thinkers. Standing amid the ruins of Rome, Byron saw the history of the Mediterranean civilizations as a series of cycles that always followed the same course:

> First freedom, and then glory, when that fails,
> Wealth, vice, corruption, barbarism at last.

And Shelley, meditating upon the Platonic cycle, shuddered before the awful prospect of wars and decadence that would inevitably succeed even a return of the Golden Age. Between such romantics and Mr. Wells there is not much difference when it is a matter of the rise and fall of nations.

Mr. Wells, however, has had the benefit of Victorian optimism, and he therefore has grafted the theory of inevitable human progress on to the older obsession with the cyclical history of an inevitable rise and fall. He looks back (without really knowing what he does) to the good nineteenth-century

days when science for a time seemed ready to become the centralizing, determining authority which would replace the old religious and political authorities. The dream of the Great Society which runs through all of Mr. Wells's books has its foundation in the Victorian idea of science as man's Promethean deliverer from all of the old discords and tyrannies. For Mr. Wells, Progress is the dogmatic certainty that is sufficient to motivate all human actions, and Technology is the instrument by which Progress is to be made effective. Progress is his God, and Technology is his Messiah. With respect to these deities he is pure fundamentalist, as yet untouched by the new skepticism and agnosticism that have drawn many younger intellects away from science.

The novelty of Mr. Wells's ideas is therefore only superficial. His terminology is current, that is all. As a strategist he resembles the Brass Hats of the World War, who gave orders for the manipulation of gas, tanks, and machine-guns, but all the time *thought* in terms of Napoleonic mass assault. The principles in which Mr. Wells believes have repeatedly failed in the course of the past century to secure anything like human solidarity even with the limited area of Europe. What makes him think that they will avail to secure human solidarity in the world area? There is something childish and fretful about his view of the World State. We suspect him of wanting to Anglicize the universe, with a devoted band of Buck Rogerses, clad in space suits and armed with "pacificin." This vision is a little cheap.

But his greatest mistake is in confusing *must-be* with *ought-to-be*. He is a Necessitarian, who goes far beyond the common variety of modest economic determinists. His Utopia is not an ideal, it is only a by-product of circumstance. His mask of bouncing cheerfulness hardly conceals the man's quivering pessimism. He is not even a good fatalist, but shows a blustering alarm before man and nature. He fears

every faculty of man except his capacity for rational knowledge, and he distrusts every aspect of nature that cannot be ticketed in the laboratory.

With such a constitution, he naturally omits to consider even so modest a fact as simple human desire. For that reason, if for no other, we are obliged to date Mr. Wells as belonging more to the nineteenth century than to the twentieth—or twenty-first. Even some of the economic determinists will admit that, upon occasion, men may choose what economics they will be determined by. Other men are pointing out that now, as often in the past, groups and nations have made non-economic, or "unnecessary" choices.

Many years ago, Van Wyck Brooks in his critical study, *The World of H. G. Wells,* held it possible to argue that the "intellectualist" or Wellsian view is too glib and easy. Let Wells only be compared with the artists, who, since they look at all human motives, give a more complete interpretation, and the shallowness of his views, Brooks said, is readily evident. Artists are likely "to throw into relief the deep, obscure conviction of the 'plain man'—commonly the good man—that to make life conform with ideas is in some way to deprive the world of just those elements which create character and to strike at an ideal forged through immemorial suffering and effort." Then Brooks continues, in terms that would fit much contemporary discussion:

> Merely to dismiss as dumb folly an all but universal contention of this kind . . . is to beg the whole question of intellectualism itself. For, if it could be conclusively shown that any view of life not incidentally but by its nature emasculated life and destroyed the roots of character, then of course, no matter how rationally self-evident it might be, and how much confusion and suffering it might avert, it would never even justify its own reason for being—it would never *succeed,* the best part of human nature would oppose it to the end of time and the intelligence itself would be discredited.

But Mr. Wells does not inquire about "the best part of human nature" or indeed understand any part of it that does not suit his purposes. If he does not understand what is in another man's head, he is simply moved to knock that man on the head, with the barbaric petulance that he likes to attribute to Tennessee Fundamentalists and Irish Catholics. In *The Shape of Things to Come* all such people, high and low, are treated as Stalin treats the Trotskyites. They have the "Opposition Spirit." And they are located in "the still half barbaric peasant populations of Haiti, Ireland, West and Central Africa, American Georgia and its associated states, Georgia in the Caucasus." Perhaps the juxtapositions found in this list illustrate the kind of humor we are to expect in the World State. But they seem, to a dissenting American, like the sneer of a petulant and shallow old man at those parts of humanity that differ from himself and hence are (this is primitive logic) hostile. There is some comfort, however, in knowing that the existence of such portions of humanity, characterized by a stout "opposition spirit," constitutes by Mr. Wells's own admission a formidable obstacle to the establishment of the Wellsian Utopia.

Yet if Mr. Wells is to be fully answered, he must be opposed by people who go beyond Van Wyck Brooks and ask not only of the artist but also of the statesman and economist that they base their systems upon the heterogeneity of human desires and add an ethical Ought to the pragmatic Must. The final test of any Utopia, as of the forms of Utopianism that appear in economic systems, governments, and religions, lies in whether it provides a way of life for humanity that is actually a human way. It must call out other faculties than intellect and skill alone. Why should the human species survive, if it cannot survive nobly? The Wellsian salvation

is only another form of destruction, for his Utopia rests upon technology and power at the expense of all else. His vision seems petty in comparison with the visions of Plato, More, Dante, or Bacon. But for a contrasting vision, which is in itself the most powerful criticism that could be offered of the Wellsian Utopia, I turn to a more nearly contemporary item. It might be taken as an answer to the question: Would humanity accept Mr. Wells's World State if it should be set up? The answer comes from a great Irishman—one of that race catalogued by Mr. Wells as among the irredeemable Opposition.

In 1922 the late George William Russell (Æ) published *The Interpreters,* a prose work which examines critically the identical world situation anticipated in *The Shape of Things to Come.* In this narrative the World State (Russell calls it an Empire) already exists—a Wellsian World State in outline, with its power resting on control of the air, and its government in the hands of a scientific aristocracy. But a revolt has flared up, in a nation that very closely resembles Ireland, and the book begins at the moment of revolt. We see the poet Lavelle hastening through a city where an explosion has already given warning that the outbreak has begun and where the crowding citizens only await a further signal to show their colors and take part in the fighting. People are rising against "the iron law of an iron age." "After centuries of frustrated effort the nation, long dominated by an alien power which seemed immutable, had a resurrection." The resurrection has led to a formidable uprising. The air fleets are arriving to crush it if they can. Fighting is in progress to gain strategic points in the city. In the hurlyburly the poet is seized by the enemy, with other leaders who are his companions in arms. All are thrust into an upper room to await almost certain execution at dawn. Since it is no time for sleeping and they are for the moment impotent to help their friends out-

side, they spend the night in a discussion of the motives that brought them to rebel.

What follows is a Platonic symposium dealing with two major questions: first, what are the causes that lead men to rebel against a scientific society, and, second, "how shall right find its appropriate might?"—or, what principle of revolution will prevent high-minded revolutionists from becoming, in their turn, brutal oppressors?

The leading persons of the symposium may be taken, as Russell says in his introduction, as "scattered portions of one nature dramatically sundered as the soul is in dream." They are the parts of human nature that Wells would forget or destroy.

The poet Lavelle is ruled by the earth-spirit. Like a true Celtic mystic, he believes in intuitive communion with nature and the gods of nature. He is a nationalist—or perhaps he is a regionalist—who holds that the earth-spirit makes for diversity of life. Every race has its own culture, and the races or nations follow "archetypal images." It is tyranny, or indeed sacrilege, to violate the resulting unity, or "orchestration of race," by imposition from without.

Leroy, a writer, stands for democracy, or even for an individualism which amounts, in its ideal extreme, to anarchy.

For Culain, a socialist leader, the rebellion is a revolt of humanity. He is not in the struggle "merely to exchange world masters for nation masters." But he is not a Marxian socialist. He is nearer to being a Christian, for he would transform the world by love.

Rian, an architect, allies himself with one point of view or the other, according as it seems momentarily to promise a healthy and natural form of art. He opposes the World State because the state "does not create beauty."

Brehon, the historian, is the unconscious, yet probably the remote, cause of the rise of the national spirit to revolutionary

action. Years before, he devoted his whole life to writing a history of his country, which, when published, had a profound effect. "He had unveiled so extraordinary a past, so rich a literature in a language almost forgotten, that his work became an object of passionate study by his countrymen, and what had been intended almost as a funeral oration or panegyric over a dead nation had the effect of rekindling it." For years he has been in retirement, and nobody knows in what direction his recent thinking has turned.

Lavelle the poet, Leroy the individualist, Culain the socialist, and Rian the architect are the true revolutionary types. Brehon the historian acts as moderator in the symposium and at the end offers the view that synthesizes all views. To balance the discussion, a sixth character is introduced—Heyt, "the autocrat of one of those great economic federations which dominated state policy and whose operations had created deep bitterness among the revolting people." He has been taken prisoner by mistake and will be released as soon as he is identified. During this one night he is given full opportunity to defend the World State against its critics.

The discussion that follows the introduction of these figures is one of the finest pieces of dialectic of modern times. I do not know how the complexities of human nature could be better set forth. Wells finds one motive and one only for adherence to the World State—the need for human solidarity; and only one human capacity to be used as an instrument in establishing this solidarity—man's power to exploit and manipulate nature. But Russell discovers several dominating motives which must be reconciled with one another if a World State is to come about. The difference between Russell and Wells is the difference between wisdom and technology. One cannot help reflecting that the Wellsian World State forces us to the regrettable dilemma of choosing between the two, in favor of an austere and dictatorial technology; but Russell

seems to tell us that technology can be retained if wisdom rules.

As the symposium progresses, with the several minds keyed by the moment to the noblest expression of which each is capable, the argument of each in turn seems unanswerable, until it is answered, or modified and balanced, by some different view of equal nobility and fervor.

Lavelle the poet argues for the integrity of national cultures. "How," he says, "could national genius create a civilization if an alien power controls the economic and cultural activities of the people, if it substitutes in youth a mongrel culture for the national culture?" The national culture is not necessarily superior to the alien culture because the latter is alien. But "natural aptitudes are not interchangeable.... We can draw inspiration from other races, but their culture can never be a substitute for our own.... If all wisdom was acquired from without it might be politic to make our culture cosmopolitan. But I believe our best wisdom does not come from without, but arises in the soul and is an emanation from the earth-spirit, a voice speaking directly to us as dwellers in the land."

Lavelle goes on to condemn "rootless" cultures and to explain what he means by "mongrel" cultures. "In countries where they have lost the primeval consciousness of unity with the earth-spirit they either have no mythology and cosmogony and thought is materialistic, or else they go to the Greek or Jew for spiritual culture. So distant lands are made sacred, but not the air they breathe; not the earth under foot. A culture so created has rarely deep roots, for it is derivative."

To Heyt, the advocate of the World State, such ideas are juvenile, romantic, backward. He is a realist and believes in power. "The might of an organism is the measure of its rightness.... The upholding of a regional ideal is like the display of a ruined house." The weakness of the regional

ideal is enough to condemn it for him. Power is where it belongs, in the hands of the World State, which is ruled by pragmatic minds that can organize control. In the new element, the air, which is now the governing element, no frontiers can exist. The sanction for this power is science, which reveals the unity of nature but condones no weakness. "Science," he argues, "now sits in the seat of Caesar."

Leroy the individualist, or philosophical anarchist, stands apart from both these views, though he is much nearer to Lavelle than to Heyt. He admits that a World State ruled by science is a possible achievement, but it is bound to be dehumanizing. It will turn complete persons into "fractional elements." "The more scientifically efficient is the organism you create," he says to Heyt, "the more does it dominate the units and make them in its own image.... Though there be one thousand millions in your world state, does it in its totality equal one Shakespeare?"

Yet, thus prizing the sanctity of the individual life, he must go on to differentiate himself from his fellow-rebel, Lavelle. He has stood with Lavelle in the fight for national freedom, but when that fight is won he would go on to fight "for the freedom of the local community and for the greater richness and variety in life," presumably to the point of rebelling against the nation if the nation should take the role of oppressor. Like Jefferson he has sworn eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the human mind. His irrepressible quest for freedom is a kind of perpetual dissidence of dissent which must go on setting man against society, wherever society denies the sanctity of the individual.

For Culain the socialist the World State will be overcome neither by nationalism nor by individualism, but "by pity." Born in a city tenement, he early acquired the kind of humanism that is humanitarian. "My first thought beyond myself came," he says, "because of an old woman who wept a

quarter of an hour before she died, being unable to rise and give help to another." For Culain "the life which forgets itself turns to its true immortality." His vision, unlike that of Lavelle who has dreamed of the earth-spirit, has been of souls "brighter as they turned from themselves," and darker "as they clutched at the personal." He is communist and socialist (in the Platonic, ideal sense, not in the Marxian sense) because he believes "humanity to be a single being in spite of its myriad forms, faces, and eyes." "Whatever makes us clutch at the personal, whatever strengthens the illusion of separateness, whether it be the possession of wealth, or power over the weak, or fear of the strong, all delay the awakening from this pitiful dream of life by fostering a false egoism."

Heyt denounces this view; it would result in a "spineless society." The poet Lavelle is at first inclined to sympathize with Culain, but is checked by Leroy. "You have vision," Leroy says to the socialist, "but you cannot give your vision to those who will build up your communist state. Your organization will be to them an opaque idea, an end in itself, not an avenue to the soul.... It will force on humanity an iron brotherhood, and that would be the deepest of human hells! You offer your candle of vision to the blind. But what use can it be to the blind except as a bludgeon?"

In such terms the parley continues through the hours of night. The noise of battle in the air and on the streets draws them now and then to the windows, and the occasion, as well as the logic of their own minds, brings them to the question of force. Should men be completely non-violent, using only the methods of passive resistance that Culain advocates; or should they take the view of Lavelle, and to some extent of Leroy, that the philosophical onlooker is inevitably vanquished and negated by the crude materialist: that "ideals for which men are not ready to die soon perish"? At last, with all views stated, but not yet reconciled, they turn to Brehon

the historian, who has so far taken but little part in the discussion.

"I do not advocate philosophical indifference," he says, "for I believe we can be fighters in the spirit and use immortal powers.... I believe spiritual ideals, except for those who can maintain them through all conflict, are lost if we defend them by material means. There are other ways by which right can find its appropriate might."

Brehon then explains that every conflict has left a wave of materialism behind it. Love and hate are both great transforming powers. But by hate nations "create in themselves the character they imagine in their enemies. Hence ... all passionate conflict results in an interchange of characteristics."

But how may spiritual powers, unaided by material weapons, ever win victories, they ask.

Then Brehon reveals—and this must have been the heart of the matter for Russell, the theosophist and mystic—that he is one of a small company of men scattered through the world, who by long self-discipline have learned the ancient wisdom of how "feeling and imagination radiate their influence to the boundaries of the world soul as stars shed their light through space." With the Christs and Buddhas the deed is done when the thought is born, and by "single gentleness" they do more than armies. To the architect Rian's objection that men do not dwell in imaginary houses, Brehon answers that the physical or outer powers are enriched and not impoverished by the exercise of spiritual force.

And for any who may fear, with Lavelle the poet, that all human distinctions vanish, under the operation of this "spiritual force," in a haze of transcendentalism, he has a general answer, a theory of what humanity is like.

Whatever we think, says Brehon, we think in terms of matter, energy, and spirit, and there is nothing beyond these except the mystic unity of Deity. "All that is substance in us

aspires to the ancestral beauty"—that is the category of matter, or earth, in which the poet moves. "All that is power in us desires to become invincible"—that is the category of Heyt, the man of the World State. "All that is consciousness longs for fullness of being"—that is the category of Culain the socialist, which in a lesser sense is spiritual.

And what of Leroy's anarchic ideas? The answer is that we can imagine natures "so balanced that they may be said to be more complete symbols of the Self-existent or Solitary of the Heavens in whom all qualities inhere." Such men tend to be self-sufficing. "They exist in increasing numbers, and their philosophy, from being the most despised of political theories, has in three hundred years become one of the most powerful." The notion of the right of the individual represents, apparently, a higher stage of humanity than the herd instinct. "The creation of great individuals is the intent of Nature.... The external law imposed by the greatest of states must finally give way before the instinct for self-rule which alone is consonant with the dignity and divinity of man." But he adds: "Though these are travelling on the true path I do not think they will attain their full stature until they comprehend the spiritual foundations on which other political theories rest, and can build on them as do the devotees of beauty or love or power."

Here then is the "true path." But if the individualist neglects "spiritual powers," he will never tread it with consistent success. All men must guard against a partial exercise of their humanity.

Those who seek for beauty will never master its magic unless they also have power, and those who seek for power will find that the mighty surrenders itself fully only to that which is most gentle; and we shall be repulsed perpetually until we have made perfect in ourselves those elements out of which both we and the universe are fashioned.... Therefore we ought to regard

none who differ from us as enemies but to contemplate them rather with yearning, as those who possess some power or vision from which we are shut out but which we ought to share.

The book ends with a poem which Lavelle has been moved by the excitement of the moment to compose. As the dawn comes, the noise of conflict draws nearer to the building where they are imprisoned. The World State is losing the battle here. Its defenders must evacuate. But the prisoners cannot be taken along. The building will be blown up, and they with it. Heyt is identified and allowed to pass out to the army of his own people. Lavelle is on the point of intervening to save Brehon also, for he is guiltless of rebellion. But the old historian stops the poet. It is Brehon's choice to go to his death with those who have been brought to rebellion partly through his studies, and who have received guidance from him in the last moment of their lives.

Whether or not we accept individualism, amounting in its ideal state to anarchy, as the "true path" for humanity, Russell's criticism of a technological World State whose sway is based on power is fundamental and seemingly unanswerable. A technological World State like that represented in the views of Heyt or Wells can be set up only by the abstraction of one human quality at the expense of all others. If so set up, this state will contain the seed of its own ruin. That ruin might prove to be more catastrophic than the end imagined by Wells for our contemporary modern world, if, to use Russell's phrase, it should beget an injustice so monstrous that it would be "shaken off the back of nature" as once Atlantis was shaken.

Whatever we may think of Russell's unelaborated notion concerning spiritual powers, his central idea is all-important to those who are attempting in one way or another to remake our confused social order. No World State is desirable, no national state, no form of civilization, no order of society

unless it can accommodate and reconcile the different human qualities symbolized in Lavelle, Culain, and Heyt, and united, though in bitter incompleteness and frustration, in Leroy. Only on such terms can we have a human society—if all we have known of humanity at its best or can conceive when we think in human terms, is worth preserving. Here is the only possible answer to Byron's question: "Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be?" It is of course not a new answer but an old one, which implies two great principles, local autonomy and federation. It is the answer made by the founders of the American society, so far as some of them, wise men like Russell, contemplated an order of society as well as a political instrument. But our wavering concern, now with morals or humanitarianism, now with politics, and now with economics or with science as a form of power—all this habit of abstraction has obscured the original intention from our view. If, as Herbert Agar has said, we in America are entering another Great Debate, like that which preceded the American Revolution or the War Between the States, a debate which will deal with fundamentals rather than with sham issues, then it is good to remember that one great mind, recently alive in the Western world, could foresee the character of the argument and give it a noble, a human shape. In Wells, the goal of technological specialization becomes a club of fear with which to beat the unruly into subjection. But in Russell there is the voice of a wisdom that we might have thought departed from the earth.